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Prestige House, Valleybridge
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Subscriptions
UK £40.80, Europe £55
Rest of the World £65
Based on 12 issues and includes
mailing
Website
www.coarsefishinganswers.com

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ISSN 1750-9629



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WELCOME

NEW YEAR, NEW LOOK

Here we are, with the first issue of 2016; where has the time gone? I really hope you've all had a great year's fishing. I know I have! The fishing gods have been with me this past year and a few PBs, along with some great bags of fish, have been caught. I won't mention the blanks in between, though!

With it being the first issue of the New Year, I thought it would be a good time to make some interesting changes to the magazine that I hope you'll enjoy. Firstly, there's a dedicated commercial fishery section called Bag Up! and every month this will be jammed full of all the latest tips, advice, tackle, top anglers and knowledge you'll need to be successful at your local venue. Commercials offer you the best chance of action, especially at this time of year, and we have the anglers to help you get the best out of them! What's even better is that F1s (the new breed of super carp) feed all year round, meaning you won't be sat biteless any more! To whet your appetite, Tony Curd gives us a masterclass on the species starting on page 63.

If you're not a commercial fan then don't panic, there's still tons of specimen and river action to get you going. Why not check out Gareth Goldson's Specimen Diary on page 23. This is exclusive to CFA and if you want to see the former Drennan Cup winner's monster catches, you'll see them here first!

Tight lines.
Rob Smith

rob.smith@dhp.co.uk

R. Smith



Send your coarse fishing question to us at
myanglingquestion@dhp.co.uk

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Brand-new dedicated bagging-up section. Your one-stop shop to commercial fishery success.

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OUR EXPERTS



BOB NUDD

Four-time world champ Bob has one of the finest angling brains around.



JAN PORTER

The matchman turned big fish ace, knows more than most about catching fish.



DES SHIPP

Des is one of the world's best match anglers and a pole expert.



MATT GODFREY

England's Matt is one of the best young anglers in the country.



ROMAN BUCZYNSKI

Top speci angler with many big fish under his belt.



STU REDMAN

A commercial match angler with years of baggin' experience.



GARETH GOLDSON

Former Drennan Cup Champ and impressive big-fish angler.



DARREN COX

Top match angler Darren has your queries covered.



TONY CURD

Top commercial matchman with an incredible talent to fill his net with fish.



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BIG FISH

Predator expert Chris Lowe recalls the recent capture of a giant lure-caught pike...



With the weather conditions looking bang on for a fish or two and the predator season in full swing, I started to gather my gear together. Wanting to make the most of the time, I grabbed my trusty St Croix 7ft 6in Medium Heavy rod and teamed it with an Abu 5601 JB multiplier loaded with 80lb Power Pro and finished off with a strong titanium trace. Lurewise, I decided to only take a handful! Those that I have the most faith in that have served me well, particularly the awesome Squirrely Burt from the USA.

I set off on the 50-mile trip to some gravel

pits that I have been fishing in Derbyshire. There are four that I am lucky enough to have access to, with two of them being very kind to me over the last few years and one giving up a fish of 28lb a few seasons ago. It was my gut instinct to head to this pit. The water is challenging, to say the very least: it's deep and pretty much unfishable most of the way around it due to limited bank access, weed and the gravel works that are going on.

After a few hours of searching the water column trying to locate the fish, I finally had a follow. It wasn't a big fish but a good-sized double that immediately put me on edge.

After a few more casts and no other sightings a change of lure and pace was required. I swapped to an Illex Dexter Jerk 150 in the Clockwork Orange pattern. The first cast with this lure nailed a nice double of around 12 to 14lb. I quickly unhooked her and slipped her back. During the walk back I decided to have a few final casts in a peg that has never produced anything for me, mainly due to there being no real features around. However, ever the optimist I chose another one of my Squirrely Burts, this time in a walleye pattern. Working the lure around five feet down I retrieved it quickly to start with, making fan casts around



the area, hoping to draw fish into the swim or at least get a quick reaction take. Nothing happened, so a change in the lure retrieve was called for. A much slower pace this time, with long pauses that keep the lure in the pike's striking zone, while the movement in the tail antagonises the fish. As the lure slowly begins to rise it's forcing that pike to strike.

As I was working the lure back towards me I noticed a lovely looking pike around five feet behind the lure – a big one! A couple of short, hard taps of the rod tip threw quick jerks into the lure, followed by that deadly pause! It was suddenly a case of waiting and letting it

all happen. After what seemed like a lifetime it finally took the lure. Suddenly everything locked up tight and water erupted. Pike on!

She blew out of the water like a nuclear submarine and powered away on the surface, tail walking and stripping line in the process. She did this a few more times before she started to admit defeat and then, as quickly as it all started, it was all over. There she was on the surface, head up over my net! "Get in!" I screamed. As I began to gain my composure I suddenly became overwhelmed by the whole event. As I was standing over the net looking down at this big old girl I was thinking: "Is this a

new PB that lies in my net?"

She was now unhooked and resting in my net as I made a few calls to my trusted friends to come down and take pictures and assist with the weighing. To be honest, I thought I was looking at a mid-thirty and I couldn't believe my eyes when the scales settled at 29lb 10oz. Just to double check we made sure everything was correct and reweighed her. Again 29lb 10oz, just a 6oz meal away from that magical 30lb mark. Not a new PB but she was without doubt a truly stunning-looking esox with a huge head and a badass attitude to match. It's a capture that I will not forget and my second biggest pike on a lure. COARSE FISHING



CFA EXPERT

Name: Bob Nudd

Hometown: Wisbech

Sponsors: Browning/Van Den Eynde



How do I fish **IRISH** style?

Photos: **Craig Butterfield**

As anglers search for quality fishing on natural venues, Irish waters have seen a surge in popularity. The tactics can be used anywhere, as four-time world champion Bob Nudd explains...

I spend several weeks a year in the Emerald Isle fishing the various festivals and I'm a huge supporter of the quality fishing on offer. My approach is very effective in Ireland but also right here on English soil, or water!

I love Ireland; the fishing and atmosphere are absolutely brilliant and I'd certainly recommend that any serious angler takes a trip over there to enjoy the fabulous sport on offer. Although there are stillwaters where the fishing can be difficult, on the vast majority of venues there is an abundance of fish so you can fish in a positive manner, something that suits me perfectly.

Because the majority of the venues I fish these days are large loughs, the first thing I would say is that before you start fishing make sure you get comfortable, preferably in the water if you have a box with legs. By sitting out in the water you can get away with fishing a much shorter pole. A lot of times in Ireland I only fish 10 to 11.5 metres because the shorter pole not only helps speed up your catch rate but it also helps presentation in the strong winds that can really effect these large expanses of water. A couple of quality side trays also help to keep everything to hand, so I don't have to keep getting off my box and wading back to the bank every five minutes. →

QUICK-FIRE QUESTIONS

Q What strength elastic is best for skimmers?

A I use a solid No5 but it's also important not to have too much elastic. Only elasticate a top three when targeting carp. For skimmers and hybrids the length of a top two is more than adequate.

Q Do you use a bulk or strung-out shotting pattern?

A For skimmers I like to fish a bulk to get the bait down. For roach and sometimes hybrids a lighter strung-out shotting pattern can work to catch them on the drop.

Q What hook baits are best for skimmers?

A Maggots and worms are great for skimmers. Make sure they're fresh, though, skimmers will ignore a burst maggot.

Q Do you fish dead depth or overdepth?

A For skimmers I will fish just overdepth, for roach and hybrids I'll fish around an inch or two off the bottom.

Q Does it matter how you lay the rig in?

A It certainly does. These big, open waters can be affected by tow and laying your rig in against the tow will often give your bait a much better fall and produce a much quicker bite.



Window feeder on the left for getting the bait down quickly; cage feeder for producing a slow-sinking cloud.

The two main tactics I use in Ireland are the pole and the feeder; both are reliable for catching fish and, as always, I like to keep my approach simple and positive.

Before I detail the tackle that I use, I should mention my bait choices. Firstly, maggots and casters. I add these to my groundbait and use them as loose feed and I take a minimum of two pints of each for a typical five-hour session. I'll also take a tub of worms, which again I'll use as feed on the pole and feeder, and on the hook. Finally, groundbait. Unlike in England, where the majority of mixes are fishmeal based for roach, skimmers and hybrids, in Ireland you need to be using a traditional mix. My first choice on a water that holds a good head of fish is a 50/50 mix of Van Den Eynde Secret and Bream. This gives a nice soft mix that breaks down quickly on the bottom, releasing the loose offerings within the ball or the feeder.

You'll be pleased to know that the tackle I use is very similar to what I use for fishing positive in England. Therefore, you needn't buy lots of extra tackle that you'll never use again.

To demonstrate my tactics, I've brought the Coarse Fishing Answers team to Ferry Meadows

in Peterborough. It's a huge expanse of water, around eight feet deep and unless you knew otherwise you'd think you were in Ireland. It's even grey and looks like raining at any moment!

I've plumbed up and I'm going to be fishing the pole at 11.5 metres and the feeder around 40 metres; not a huge cast and one you can comfortably achieve with a normal 11 to 12ft feeder rod. One thing I would suggest when fishing the feeder for roach, skimmers and hybrids is to use braid. Because it has no stretch it magnifies the tiny bites and turns them into positive pulls and certainly helps you hit more bites.

To the 0.10mm braid I tie a length of shockleader, which is 0.26mm Browning Cenex Feeda line. This helps casting and, being thick, also helps produce a nice stiff paternoster that never tangles. To this I tie a small swivel to help reduce line twist and finally my hooklength, which is three feet of 0.15mm Browning Cenex Power. On the business end I have a size 12 Kamasan B512, which although it sounds large is perfect for presenting a section of worm and a couple of maggots.

My feeder choice is one I actually helped to →

HOW TO LOAD BOB'S WINDOW FEEDER



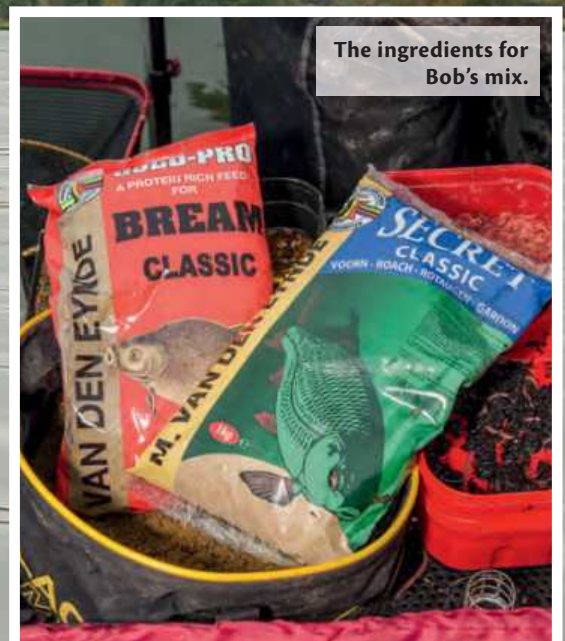
1 Add baits to match hook baits, in this case casters, worms and maggots.



2 Plug the bait with a soft-mixed groundbait that will break up quickly on the deck.

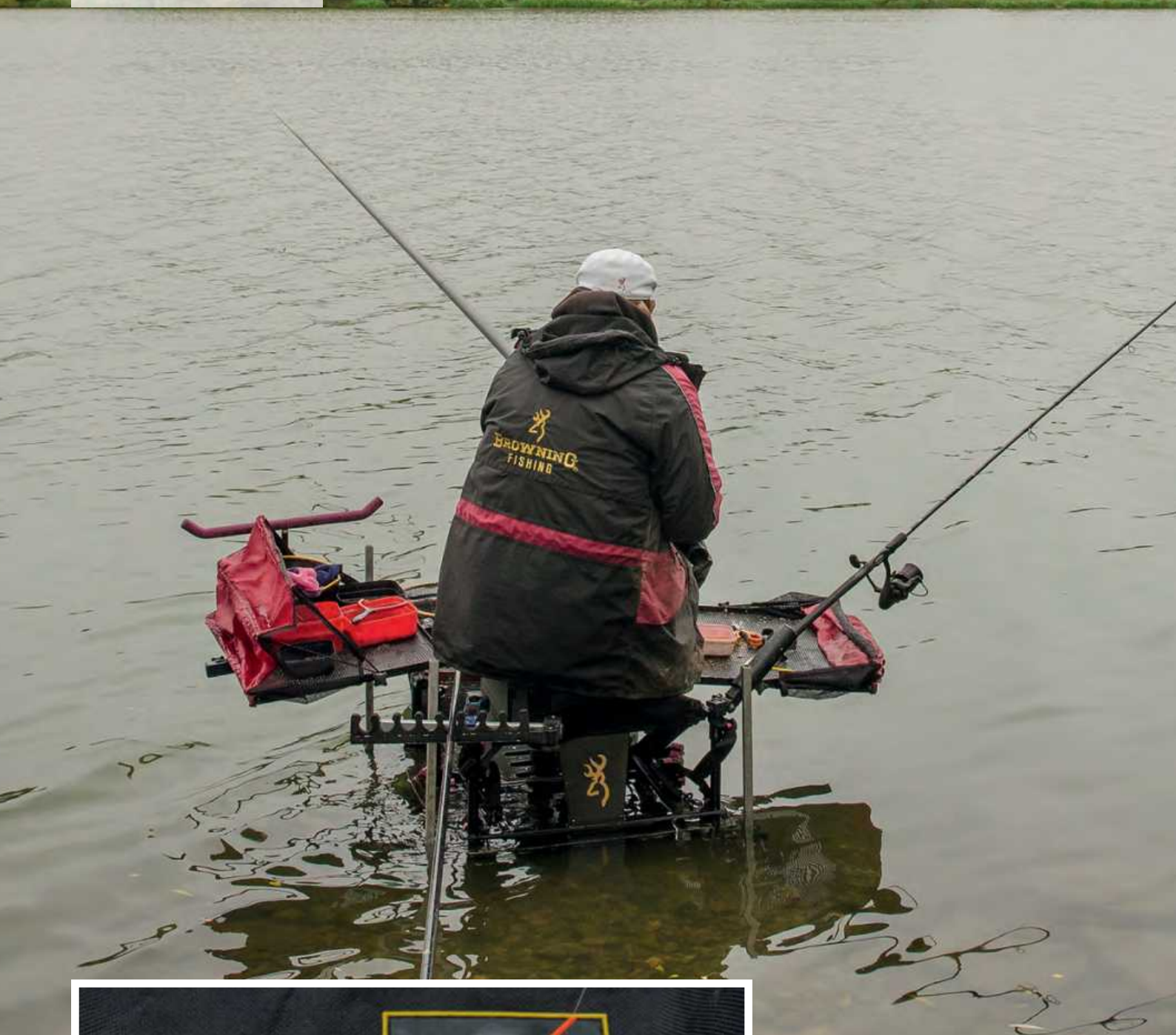


3 The window feeder gets your bait down quickly, away from small fish.



The ingredients for Bob's mix.

Large lakes needn't be a struggle if you apply yourself.



Bob's business-end pole tackle.

design and is massively popular in Ireland. It's a 35g window feeder and my first choice for bream, bigger skimmers and hybrids because it gets all of the bait to the bottom quickly before emptying. If, however, I want to target smaller fish such as roach or small skimmers, then I use a bottom-weighted cage feeder with the groundbait just lightly pushed in. This produces a slow-sinking cloud throughout the water column and in conjunction with a smaller hook bait, such as double maggot, can produce a bite every cast, often as soon as the feeder hits the bottom. In effect, these enable me to fish the feeder in two completely different ways; it's just a case of finding out what's in your swim and then picking the correct feeder to suit.

Simplicity is also the main emphasis on the pole. With this in mind, I've set up just one rig to enable me to get my bait down to the feeding fish as quickly as possible. My float



a small roach. Although I've put in a generous bed of bait I'm also feeding 15 to 20 maggots every put-in via a catapult to help draw fish in. It's important not to worry too much about keeping the bait too tight because any bait that goes beyond the pole tip actually helps to give the fish hanging off the groundbait some feed to keep them interested and build their confidence.

After a few small roach in the opening 20 minutes I finally hook something a little bigger. Several feet of elastic are pulled from the tip and I'm soon slipping the net under a chunky 6oz hybrid. Hopefully it's a good sign.

The loose feed seems to be really drawing the fish in and the groundbait is helping to hold them in the swim. I'm soon catching a hybrid every drop, with several holding the bait and olivette on the way down, creating a positive lift bite; something you need to be very aware of when targeting Irish/English hybrids.

A few bigger fish put in an appearance, a couple pushing 1lb, before I start missing a few bites and feel it's time to give the pole a rest and try the feeder.

I'm hoping some bream have settled on the feeder line, so I'm fishing with half a worm and two dead maggots, a great bait for picking out bigger fish.

No sooner has my feeder settled than the tip darts forward. I lift my rod and feel the telltale knock of a fish. It's not huge, or a bream, but it's

a nice 6oz roach.

The same happens on the next cast and then an 8oz skimmer puts in an appearance before I get a run of smaller hybrids. Bites are coming quickly, so I don't bother trying to sink my line. I just keep a tight line to the feeder and wait expectantly.

I have a busy 40-minute spell on the feeder and although it's enjoyable I can't help but feel that the bigger fish won't get a look in.

Dropping back on the pole, the fish have grown in confidence and it's a fish every drop-in. The fishing is absolutely fantastic and it really is hard to believe that I'm not in Ireland. I keep slipping the net under some quality hybrids and there are so many in the swim now that I'm getting most of my bites on the drop, with a 1g rig!

As the light begins to fade we have to bring the session to a close but only after having 'one last fish' at least 10 times! I've really loved the day, not only because I've been able to demonstrate my Irish tactics but also because I've been able to show that on the right venue they can still be used in England. When the fish are feeding and you can attack your peg with a positive approach the results can be brilliant. All that's missing is a pint of Guinness! FRANK FARMING



is a 1g Browning Nevis shotted with a 0.9g olivette two feet from the hook and three No11 droppers, giving my hook bait a slow, natural fall through the last third of the swim. My main line is 0.14mm Browning Cenex Soft to a 0.12mm hooklength and size 16 Kamasan B512. This rig is made up on a top four with a solid No5 Browning elastic. When I hook a decent fish I unship with an extra section on and use the top five to swing the fish directly to my waiting hand. This enables me to catch much faster than netting every fish; I save the net for the proper ones!

I've started today's session by balling in eight balls containing worms, maggots and casters at 11.5 metres. I've then had 10 quick casts on the feeder just to get a bed of bait out there for later in the session. Baiting my hook with a single maggot, I ship out and within 30 seconds my float shoots under and I'm soon swinging in

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Angling legend and predator fishing supremo Jan Porter is a deadbait master, so CFA arranged a session with the man himself when gravel-pit pike were on the menu.

Words and photos: Rob Smith

HOW DO YOU FISH DEADBAITS ON A LAKE?



CFA EXPERT

Name: Jan Porter

Hometown: Stratford-upon-Avon

Sponsors: Shimano, Dynamite

With lure fishing being all the rage nowadays, the art of deadbaiting seems to have been forgotten. However, it's still arguably the best tactic to bag yourself a PB pike and as the weather gets colder and predators stop chasing lures with the same gusto as they did in autumn, it's definitely time to get those deadbait rods out.

Linear Fisheries in Oxfordshire is best known for its terrific carp sport, but as winter emerges its large head of pike takes centre stage. There are pike in most of the day-ticket lakes but Jan has chosen a corner of St John's

that is well known for producing numbers of fish.

"It's a great area of the lake because, historically, the pike corral the lake's silver fish into it and pen them in," says Jan, as he flies his Spomb full of chopped-up sprats over to a clear spot some 30 yards out into the bay.

"It really pays to speak to your fishery bailiff for some guidance on where to fish but you also need to use your senses to help you locate Mrs Esos," states Jan.

"Make the effort to get out of bed early because this is a great time to spot baitfish," continues Jan. "Find these and you won't be

too far away from pike. Another great way of finding shoaled-up silvers is to look for grebe activity. This little bird is an expert at finding fish and if you discover grebes diving over a particular spot then it's a fair guess that there will be a lot of fish there."

Jan approaches his deadbait fishing in a slightly different manner from the norm, in that he likes to attract pike into his swim by baiting it with a mixture of chopped-up fish and dark groundbait. To start his session he gets his marker-float setup out, the same as you'd use for your summer carp fishing, and Jan casts the area looking for clear spots. Pike →

JAN'S TOP FOUR PIKE BAITS

MACKEREL – A very thick and tough bait that you can launch out a long way. Great for sight and very oily, the mackerel has seen the downfall of many a large pike.

HERRING – A soft bait that is hard to cast long distances but what it lacks in castability it sure makes up for in its shiny appearance and oily flesh, making it one of the best deadbaits you can buy.

SARDINE – Very soft bait that leaks flavour quickly. Keep these frozen or half frozen on the cast and leave them out there.

SPRAT – A great bait for prebaiting with because they're inexpensive. Also a great bait for sink-and-draw methods or if you're looking to get bites no matter what the size of fish.



HOW TO TIE JAN'S TRACE...



1 Cut off a 5ft length of 24lb wire.



2 Slide on a crimp and treble hook.



3 Push the tag end through the crimp and slide crimp down to treble.



4 Using crimping pliers, crimp both sides firmly.



5 Use a sleeve to prevent tangles.



6 Slide on your second treble and loop wire over bend.



7 Wind tag end around treble six times then back over bend...



8 ... and pass the wire through the eye of the treble.



9 Slide on another sleeve and the business end is finished.



10 Next slide on another crimp and a black sleeve.



11 Pass wire through a quick-change clip, crimp...



12 ... and push on a sleeve to finish your rig.

ESSENTIAL KIT

- 2.5lb to 2.75lb-test-curve rods. Jan uses Shimano 12ft Velocitys in 2.75lb test curve
- 6000-sized reels. Jan uses Shimano X-Aero 6000RAs
- 30lb wire trace
- Strong size 4, 6 or 8 trebles depending on size of bait
- 15lb mono main line. Jan uses Shimano Tribal

will feed in weed but for Jan's peace of mind and for better presentation, a clear area is best.

It doesn't take him long to locate a nice gravel area about 30 yards out into the bay. Next up, Jan clips up his marker rod, winds in and then walks out his rod until the line hits the clip. He then takes his Spomb setup, again the same as you'd use for carp fishing, and walks this out until it is eight feet past the marker rod. Why eight feet? Well, that is the depth of the water he is fishing in and he has to allow for this amount of line that is in the water, straight down from his marker.

THE FISHING GROUNDBAIT MIX

This is the messy part and a tactic that gives Jan an edge. First up, grab some sprats; supermarket baits are cheaper. Jan advises you to wear some throwaway gloves; washing-up gloves are perfect. Cut the sprats into small pieces and then add a dark groundbait. This will soak up the smell and juices of the fish and also form an

attractive cloud in the water as it leaves your Spomb.

"The mix isn't pleasant smelling but the pike love it and that's all that matters," says Jan! "You don't need to fill the lake in, three or four medium Spombloads should be ample."

GET THE RODS OUT!

All that needs to be done next is get the rods out right over the spot. To do this, Jan walks them both out to the same distance as the Spomb rod. Sardine is the bait of choice on the left rod, while on the right in goes a herring with its head chopped off to release flavour into the water.

It's always a good idea to use different baits to see which one the pike prefer. If you're getting action on one bait then you can swap your other rod to it.

IN SESSION

The weather is unseasonably mild but with the wind blowing into the bay and overcast conditions, Jan is confident of action. The first few hours pass with the only action coming from the carp anglers in the peg next door but then, at midday, Jan's right Backbiter arm lifts three inches before dropping by four. He waits expectantly over the rod for a minute or two but nothing else materialises.

"I think a pike has picked up the bait and then dropped it. I'm guessing it was a small fish." This excitement rouses spirits and the next hour flies by with tales of huge fish caught and lost – pikers are good at these stories and it, along with too many cups of tea, helps to pass the time between bites.

An hour later and this time Jan has a 'proper' bite. His left Backbiter pulls up and then drops off dramatically. This leaves a small amount of slack and the next few seconds are the most exciting for a deadbaiter, as Jan waits to see if the line will start peeling from his spool. It sure does and he is onto the rod in a flash, bending into solid resistance. It doesn't take him



Jan's fishy groundbait mix gives him an edge.

long to tame the culprit, a nice-looking pike of around 8lb – pike don't fight amazingly hard but the bite, whichever way you catch them, is the draw with this type of angling. Who knows, the next bite could be a 20-pounder!

STRIKING

When you receive a bite from a pike you need to strike straightaway. Forget all the old books you may have read about leaving the bite to develop for 10 to 20 seconds, this is a recipe for a deep-hooked fish. Striking is a case of winding down, feeling the tension of the fish and bending into it.

BITE INDICATION

Jan advises that you take as much resistance out of your setup as possible. That means using large run rings so that your line can pass through easily. Fish with an open bail arm and use back alarms such as Billy Backbiters that offer very little resistance. They also feature sliding weights so that you can adjust the tension on your line to allow for wind or tow on rivers. Jan also likes to use Delkims as front alarms. He turns the sensitivity right up and this allows him to sense the smallest of vibrations through the receiver that he clips to his hat. It also keeps him awake on slow days!



A selection of tools including forceps and hook cutters are needed to keep your pike safe.



FISH IT!

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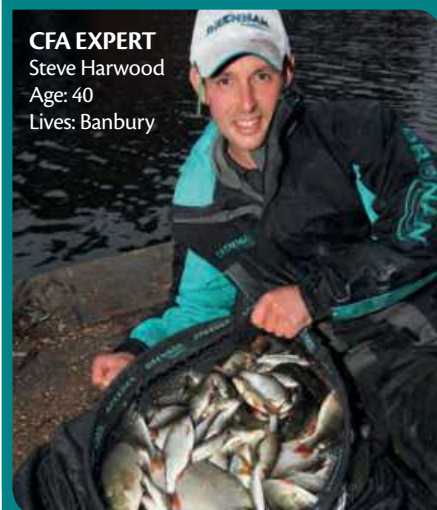
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TOP TIPS RIVER POLE FISHING

We met up with Steve Harwood on the Warwickshire Avon for some great tips on helping you catch a net of fish on the pole.

CFA EXPERT
Steve Harwood
Age: 40
Lives: Banbury



VENUE FILE

Warwickshire Avon

Location: Recreation Ground,
Stratford-upon-Avon

Controlling club: Leamington AA

Website: www.leamington-angling.co.uk

Day tickets: Available on the bank

HEAD FOR TOWN

At this time of year silver fish like roach and dace begin to go into autumn and winter mode: when their natural larders diminish and water clarity increases the fish will naturally start to shoal up for safety in numbers. That is why they begin to head for the extra warmth, shelter and food that are all more available in built-up areas.

Find a nice busy town centre with ducks being regularly fed and the fish will rarely be far away.



DARK MATTERS

Look at a roach in clear water and you'll notice it has a surprisingly dark back. This is nature's way of giving it camouflage from predators from above. I think that's why a dark groundbait mix is much better than a lighter shade. Fish like roach certainly seem to be happier feeding over a darker mix in clear water.

Today I'm using 50/50 Sensas Gros Gardons Fine and Canal Black, which makes a dark mix that can hold plenty of particles but also shouldn't be too filling.



MAKE SOME NOISE

Just because it's cold it doesn't mean the fish won't respond to several balls of groundbait being thrown in. These fish are hungry and will soon be on the scene when they hear a dinner bell being rung! A kilo is ample for a session and can be a great way to kick-start the peg and lay down a modest carpet of bait to run a pole float over.

On many days you can expect to get a bite minutes after all the commotion has settled. Even on days when the roach are being extra cautious you should still expect a few perch to be on the scene to get you off to a good start.



BRONZE IS BEST

Maggots have to be the number-one feed and hook bait as they attract everything that swims. Breadpunch is a decent option but you'll miss out on species like perch, which are valuable weight builders.

Bronze maggots have stood the test of time as the best colour for roach, dace and chub on flowing water. A few reds mixed in will give you a nice change bait.



GO WITH THE FLOW

I'm fishing 13 metres out today, which is a comfortable range and puts me into the main flow. Always have a generous amount of line between pole tip and float to allow you to run your pole rig several metres downstream. Obviously, the stronger the flow the more line you'll need. It should be at least a metre, and up to four or five times that on pacier venues.

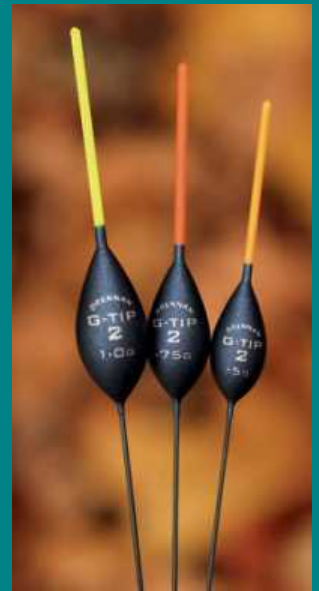
Another great tip is to leave half a pole section behind you at the start of the float's run. This allows you to then gradually ease out the rest of the pole as you follow the float downstream. The main bulk of fish should be over the groundbait, but running the float a few metres further can pick up wavier fish hanging back off the feed.



PERFECT SHAPE

These G-Tip 2 pole floats from Drennan are a perfect shape for rivers. The fairly round body ensures that you can hold them back slightly without the whole float riding out of the water. A carbon stem is less likely to tangle compared to wire, while the sensible diameter, hollow antenna will support maggots and casters easily and is easy to see in changing light conditions.

A small selection of these floats from 0.5g up to 2g should cope with at least 90 per cent of pole fishing swims you'll encounter in the UK. Shotting can be really simple with a main bulk or olivette two feet from the hook and then three dropper shot, usually No10s, spread equally below.



CASTERS FOR QUALITY

Although not essential, casters are a decent option on a cold, clear river. They are great for adding to your groundbait balls as they won't break them up in mid-air like a wriggling maggot can. They also lie nice and inert on the bottom, again working as a good holding bait.

If you are being pestered by tiny fish on maggots, slip on a dark, crisp shell and you'll often catch a much better stamp of fish.



HOLD 'EM WITH HEMP

Even if you don't intend to try hempseed on the hook, it's a brilliant holding bait. Roach in particular love grazing over these little seeds. Some people believe it's because they resemble water snails; I just think it's because they like hemp!

Either way, try and use fairly large well-cooked seeds so there are plenty of attractive white shoots on show.



GO FLUORO

A few fluorescent pinkies are a godsend on harder days. One or two of these smaller maggots on the hook can really stand out well and convince a reluctant fish to have a go.

Pinkies are also much harderier than maggots, so they can keep a lot longer in the fridge between sessions.



TRY FLUOROCARBON

If you haven't tried fluorocarbon for hooklengths you could be missing out. Although it's sometimes slightly more fiddly to tie compared to mono it is surprisingly durable and abrasion resistant and seems ever so strong.

The fact that it's near-invisible in water must also work in your favour!



LIGHT IS RIGHT

Today I'm using a 0.095mm Supplex Fluorocarbon hooklength to a size 20 Drennan Carbon Match hook. This is a great combo that's fairly light but gives me a good chance of staying in touch with any bonus perch or chub I might hook.

I've also had a few nuisance pike taking fish today and managed to get several roach that they've snaffled back without a breakage!





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Gareth Goldson's Specimen *Diary*

Former Drennan Cup winner and big-fish expert Gareth Goldson lifts the lid on his exploits, exclusively in CFA.



For the past 18 months or so I've kept something of a low profile with my angling exploits. I no longer had the desire to win weekly awards through my catches and for that reason I have kept pretty much all my big-fish captures quiet. Well, that's until now!

Coarse Fishing Answers editor Rob Smith can be a very persuasive character and after a few discussions he has talked me into writing a monthly diary detailing my angling adventures, big fish and all. You will quite simply hear it

from the horse's mouth – the highs, lows and everything in between.

RESERVOIR PERCH

Right, where do I start? I don't mind admitting to being a bit of a lure fishing junkie. I absolutely adore lure fishing for big perch, particularly on a couple of the big Midlands trout reservoirs. There is something about being on these massive expanses of water that gives me a real buzz and, despite being difficult at times, I

always leave wanting more.

Most of my fishing this month has been based around these venues, travelling back and forward at least a couple of times a week to get my lure fishing fix. It's just great fun being out in a boat for the day and so different from my normal style of angling, which sees me roving the banks on short sessions. As with most fishing, location is the absolute key and once I had found a few spots where the perch were holding up they started to come thick and fast.

Bumping off fish? It might be down to how sharp your hooks are! Gareth spends time at home sharpening his hook points – he feels this is a massive edge and accounts for many more fish over a season.



Three-pounders were on the cards most trips and it was lovely to take one or two close mates out and watch them break their stillwater perch personal bests.

Between trips I made sure I spent a couple of evenings touching up hook points on some of my jigheads. It's vitally important to make sure you keep hook points sharp. It's without doubt the biggest cause of losing fish on lures; a lesson I learnt the hard way last year when losing a really big fish seconds into the fight. At first I thought I had just been unlucky but after inspecting the hook point it was obvious I only had myself to blame. Sometimes the small things in fishing make the biggest differences, and keeping hook points sharp is a real edge.

LOBWORM PERCH

As well as the perch on the resses, I was able to squeeze in the odd short session locally, either before or after work. Although most of these sessions revolved around a couple of hours with the lure rod, once a few fish had been located it was obvious that a switch to

bait fishing was going to see more big fish hit the net. Although I love my lure fishing there is nothing like a big juicy lobworm to entice big perch to feed and, providing a steady trickle of broken lobs are fed into the swim, you can get even the most stubborn shoal of perch to start feeding.

This proved to be exactly the case, because on my initial lure trips I was able to catch one decent perch on most outings, but once a change to lobs was made the average went up to three or four fish a trip. Truly amazing fishing, and on a venue where I've never even seen another angler before. It seems that providing a river has crayfish and gets lightly fished, the perch simply flourish. With more and more of my local rivers showing signs of crayfish populations, we could be in for some very big perch in the years to come.

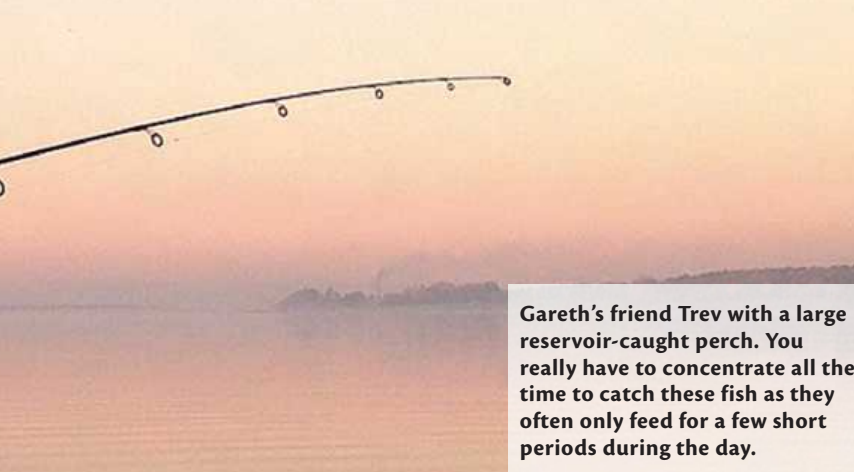
MONSTER PIKE HUNT

Although I was catching consistently I was hoping I might bump into a slightly bigger fish and on my latest session I did exactly that. After

catching a couple of low threes I had quickly made another cast downriver, hoping there was another one with my name on it. With the light fading quickly it was the ideal time for a lump to make an appearance. Right on cue, the tip twitched before slowly pulling round and a firm strike was met by a heavy weight shaking its head. I could instantly tell that it was in another league to the fish I had caught earlier. As I slowly guided it away from the snags there was a huge swirl and suddenly everything went solid. In the dying light it was hard to make out what the hell was going on and I thought I had hit some kind of underwater snag. However, the snag started to move and I suddenly realised what was going on. It was a pike, and a big one at that! A few seconds later the line parted and I was left wondering not only how big the perch I hooked was, but how big the pike must have been to grab it.

That was sadly to be the end of my fishing for the month. I'm already hatching a plan for a return visit to take revenge on that pike, so fingers crossed you'll see the photos next month.

COARSE FISHING



Gareth's friend Trev with a large reservoir-caught perch. You really have to concentrate all the time to catch these fish as they often only feed for a few short periods during the day.



Lure anglers tend to take loads of kit with them when boat fishing on reservoirs but Gareth is the complete opposite –he only takes one rod and a small selection of lures he's very confident in. He is convinced it's more about finding the fish, presentation and waiting for the perch to 'switch on'. He will often use the same lure all day and as you can see... it works!



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CFA EXPERT

Name: Rob Smith

Job: CFA editor

Favourite species: Perch



Photos: Steve Phillips

DO YOU HAVE ANY FRESH TACTICS FOR **CANAL ZANDER?**

Editor Rob Smith explores a Midlands canal for zander using a fresh approach and the results are exceptional...

With all the talk of drop-shotting, you'd be forgiven for thinking that this is the only way to catch predators, but this is far from the case. Rob Smith has discovered a new way of plundering zeds from his local cut and he's been having some great results. What's more, the tactic is as simple as they come.

Rob is on the Grand Union, one of the country's longest stretches of canal, running from Birmingham all the way to London. It's underfished and full of fish so provides great sport in peaceful surroundings. Anglers are slowly catching on to the fact that there is great sport to be had here and lure anglers in particular are ploughing a furrow in terms of investigating what the canal may hold.

One species that is taking a grip in the canals depths, whether the Canal & River Trust likes it or not, is the zander. This low-light hunting predator is flourishing in the coloured water of our canals and, unlike in clear-water venues, you can catch these canal zeds right in the middle of the day.

There are many ways to skin a cat and lures can be presented using plenty of different rigs and techniques, from drop-shotting to jigging, but Rob thinks he might have a simple method that will outfish both of these, and others, on its day. →

HOW TO MAKE ROB'S KILLER RIG



1 Take a 3in to 4in pin-tailed soft bait and slide onto a 1/0 or 2/0 worm hook.



2 Slide the bait over the offset part of the hook to give your lure added action!

Bring a selection of pin-tailed baits. Rob likes the Salty Pin from Quantum.



It's not just zander that are suckers for this method; this perch took a liking to Rob's red pin-tail.



Don't be afraid to use largish baits – perch and zander can handle them!



SIMPLE SETUP

Rob's setup is simple – a light lure rod rated at around 2g to 5g with a small fixed-spool reel. Onto this he loads 6lb braid and ties on a 4ft length of 4lb fluorocarbon – all standard canal kit. Onto the fluoro he ties on a 1/0 worm hook and then threads on a pin-tailed soft bait. This needs to be threaded all the way to the eye of the hook because Rob wants to use the kink in the hook to his advantage.

With his setup complete, Rob has enough casting weight, due to the weight of the hook and soft bait and his light, balanced setup, to cast to the far bank. What makes this setup so effective is that it can be fished slow and each flick of your rod tip transmits a lot of action into the lure.

The lure is bent, not straight, and this is crucial to its presentation in the water. When flicked, the twisted lure lifts from the bottom of the canal, flutters for a few seconds and then slowly settles on the deck. This proves irresistible for zander, who love to attack injured

baitfish. A straight soft bait would have little action and would be a lot less appealing. Rob has tried and failed using traditional hooks.

This slow, fluttering action can only be achieved by using the lightest possible setup you can get away with and is an action you simply can't replicate using drop-shot and jigging techniques.

Many of Rob's takes come in the central channel but he thinks the zander are following his bait out of the cover of the far bank. Takes often come when the lure is falling back down or even a few seconds after it has been lying motionless on the canal bed.

Soft-bait-wise, pin-tail baits work best in Rob's experience. If you go drop-shotting you should have these in your bag. They are long, slender-bodied baits that, when 'kinked' onto a worm hook, look fantastic in the water, just like a dying fish. Green is one of Rob's favourite colours for canal zander fishing. It's hard to give a reason why but it seems to outfish all other colours, particularly in coloured water. Don't

just turn up with green baits, though, because you never know what they might want on any given day – white and red baits also work well.

THE SESSION

To demonstrate this devastating tactic, Rob has brought the CFA cameras to one of his favourite stretches; it's rural with a good head of zander and plenty of far-bank cover for the fish to hide away in. Rob feels the best way to cover ground, and then hopefully fish, using this method is to have three casts in each swim – one directly in front, one to the right and one to the left, casting each as close to the far bank as possible. He is fishing slow, lifting his rod by a foot or two and lowering it to allow his bait to flutter back down. On slow days in the depths of winter he will wait up to 10 seconds before twitching the bait once more. This gives the zander a chance to find the bait and investigate it. Rob rates flavoured soft baits for his fishing as this might be the difference between a zander leaving the bait and picking it up on some days. Quantum →

CANAL ZANDER

Salty Pins work well for this method and there are other great flavoured baits from Marukyu and Berkley that also do the business.

A leisurely 10am start doesn't concern Rob. In fact, he says that most of his bites come during the middle of the day at this time of year. This could be down to a number of things. It's the warmest time of the day and it's also the time when there are more boats moving up and down the canal. These churn up mud and casting just after one has passed is often a good time to get a bite because the zander's fantastic eyesight comes into play.

ACTION

It doesn't take Rob long to receive his first bite. A couple of small plucks followed by his braid moving slowly to the right signals action and a firm strike is rewarded with a heavy bend in his rod. A light setup gives you value for money; 2lb fish fight like giants and it's addictive fun – this must be why lure fishing is so popular right now!

A great fight from a smallish zander ends with it nestling in Rob's net. It's not huge but it's all about the bite and fight with this type of fishing and Rob's happy with the start to his session.

More takes come over the next few hours – most of them down the central track – and after three hours' fishing Rob has recorded four zander and a perch to his deadly tactic.

Why don't you give it a go the next time you're out? What's great about it is you don't need much tackle. Store it in your car and you can even have a go during your lunch break! COARSE FISHING



Light, balanced tackle allows you to cast accurately and fish effectively.



A typical-sized zander from the canal.

Send your coarse fishing question to us at myanglingquestion@dhp.co.uk

THE COMPLETE CONNECTION



- 1 Dropshot Rod (available in 7ft & 8ft) 2 Dropshot Hooks (available in sizes 1, 2 & 4) 3 Dropshot Minnows (available in Fluoro, Natural & Fry - 5cm & 7cm) 4 Dropshot Fluorocarbon (available in 6lb, 8lb & 10lb) 5 Dropshot Kits (available in Mix 1 & 2 - 5cm & 7cm) 6 Snapper KDS 2000 Reel 7 Dropshot Weights (available in 5g & 10g) 8 Dropshot & Jig Braid (available in 8lb & 10lb)



How to fish the...

Chubber float

Struggling to fish fast, shallow rivers? Want to present big baits for perch, chub and barbel? Well, you need to turn to the chubber!

We all know that wagglers are designed for still and slow-moving waters, and stick floats for more pacey swims, but those fast, turbulent swims require a very different type of float, with extreme buoyancy and a thick tip. This combination produces a float that rides rough water as well as offering good visibility at 30 metres or more, and the float we're talking about here is the chubber – a classic.

There are a number of baits that work well with the chubber, or loafer, to give it its other commonly used name. One killer tactic is fishing a breadflake hook bait over mashed-bread feed.

Mashed bread, made from breaking up a loaf of sliced white bread and adding water, is an extremely effective feed for long trotting on a fast river. It falls through the water at an inconsistent rate – some pieces sinking straight to the bottom, others being pushed by the current. A large piece of breadflake fished under a chubber and trotted through this feed will have a long 'killing ground' to catch over. It's a brilliant method for big chub and roach.

Other baits that suit the chubber are lobworms for big perch and even small

livebaits work well on chubber tactics. Barbel can't resist a large lump of luncheon meat, which would otherwise be pulled under if you were using traditional stick-float tactics.

SHOTTING

The chubber is usually made from strong balsa wood or buoyant plastic, the lighter the better. Dumpy in construction, these floats are made to take between one and five SSGs and are attached to the line at both the top and bottom of the float by the use of strong float rubbers.

Use one wide float rubber close to the top of the float and another narrower one at its base to keep the float on the line, and always attach a No6 shot just under the float as a depth marker. Plumbing isn't necessary. Just keep adding depth to your rig until the float drags under as the hook catches on the bottom.

These are not floats to be fished with any great degree of finesse so a line of 4lb minimum breaking strain is perfect, fished directly from float to hook. A size 12 hook with breadflake, several maggots or two or three grains of sweetcorn would be perfect, and shot the float with a group of SSGs or,

better still, an olivette to take the bait down quickly. This bulk should be fixed at around three-quarters of the way between float and hook. One No4 or No6 shot can then be fixed halfway between the bulk and hook. Make sure you can add enough weight so that you can see the thick orange float tip... but only just.

HOW TO USE IT

The chubber is a float for trotting among feed – mashed bread, maggots, casters or whatever. Use a sideways cast to propel the tackle into the swim, with the light float following the shot out to the water.

Then, leaving your reel's bail arm open, let the float do its thing. Keep things under control with gentle finger pressure on your reel spool but try to allow the float to travel downstream unhindered. Bites will be savage but you'll still need to strike to set the hook and let the float travel a long way downstream as this method involves 'exploring' the entire length of your swim.

Keep your rod up while the float is running through to prevent too much line being on the surface and strike fast and hard.

Give the chubber a try this winter.

THREE TYPES OF CHUBBER

01 BLOW-MOULDED PLASTIC



02 BALSA



03 BLOW-MOULDED SHOULDERED



CHUBBER RIG

No6 shot underneath float as depth marker

Olivette or group of SSGs

No4 or No6 shot

Size 12 hook with breadflake

RUBBERS

Make sure you attach your float with tight rubbers, and that the one at the float's tip is fixed very near the top. This will aid tackle control and connection with a fish on the strike.



ONBOX 360 SEATBOX

The "revolutionary" new hybrid seatbox - the OnBox 360, is a new fishing station featuring a fully 360 degree rotating seat with cushioned backrest, a wide footprint, extending leg system, and an integral EVA side tray as standard.

+ FREE FEEDER ARM

RRP £229.99

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FEEDER CHAIR

+ FREE CLAMP ON SIDE TRAY

A lightweight and practical chair for feeder and stationary fishing. The sturdy backrest with adjustable inclination ensures optimal seating comfort. Each of the four telescopic feet (25mm Dia) can be adjusted in height. The seat is very comfortably upholstered. There is a shallow fold-out storage compartment underneath the seat. The feeder chair comes with a fabric case.



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At 11m the Enigma 301 Carp Pole weighs just 565g and at 13m an unbelievable 825g. Ideal for commercials housing 12/20+ elastics with 'Power Play' kits in place, but equally at home on rivers, lakes and canals. A true all rounder in every sense. Supplied with 5x Power-play kits with slot mini extension 1 x cupping kit



TEAM DAIWA CARRYALL

Using tough, PVC backed fabric nylon with highly durable reinforced plastic, the Team Daiwa Luggage Range is designed to perform season after season.



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1x Mini Extension
1x Cupping Kit



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- Double winder tray unit
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- Detachable Shoulder Strap



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SPACE STATION COMPACT

The Space Station Compact has been developed to offer all the benefits of other Space Stations but with a more compact frame system to make transportation easier. It also features a removable foot plate which is adjustable on the leg system to allow the angler to adjust the footplate to suit their most comfortable fishing position.



RRP £399.99 WAS £359.99

NOW £299.99

CLEARANCE



ABSOLUTE COMPACT SEATBOX

Absolute COMPACT The Absolute Compact hosts all of the features of the Absolute Station but is suited to the angler that prefers to travel a little lighter. The clever central mounted frame allows you to integrate all Absolute units whilst maintaining a more condensed overall size with independent height adjustment. Perfect for anglers who want uncompromising performance when tackling the steepest riverbanks or the narrowest canal towpaths.



WAS £499.99

NOW £399.99 **CLEARANCE**



BLACK MAGIC POWER STAR 11M



CLEARANCE

RRP £299.99 WAS £249.99

NOW £149.99

- 1 x Match Kit
- 1 x Power Kit
- 1 x Reversible pole Protector
- 1140g @ 11m



TKS POWER CARP 2



- 1 x Match Kit Fitted, 3 x Pre Bushed Power Kits
- 1 x Mini Ext, Pole Holdall

RRP £549.99 WAS £499.99

NOW £349.99

- Interchanges with TKS 701/801/901.
- High Modulus Carbon.
- Anti-Friction Finish.
- Section Alignment System.
- Supplied with Deluxe Holdall.
- 12 month warranty.
- Elastic Rating 20.

Bait Bible

WORMS

Your guide to getting the most out of your worm fishing.

Worms, in their various forms, are one of nature's great baits. You can catch most species that swim on one and they often pick up the larger fish in your swim. The natural scent, especially when chopped, attracts hungry fish from far and wide.

When it comes to targeting cold-water species on commercial waters as well as rivers, canals and natural stillwaters, worms are one of the best baits for silver fish and larger species like carp, as well as big perch. It's a bait that's stuffed full of natural amino acids – which fish love!

As soon as temperatures start to drop, worms play a big part in many anglers' armouries and are a bait that you should always carry with you.

The next few pages give you some helpful hints and rigs to get you started.



HOW TO CREATE A DEADLY WINTER WORM FEED



1 Grab a handful of redworms.



2 Put them into your pole pot.



3 Now add a handful of red maggots.



4 Pour in some liquid additive. Krill or bloodworm works well.



5 Take some scissors and get chopping.



WORM TIP 1

The best way to clean your worms is to tip them onto a maggot riddle and gently rub your hand across them. The soil will fall through the riddle leaving you with clean worms.

WORM TIP 2

Want to feed worms on rivers? A baitdropper is the answer to get your worm freebies on the deck. A great edge for big perch, which love worms.





6 You should be left with something like this.



7 Now add some of the soil that comes with the worms.



8 Give the mix a good stir.



9 You're left with a stodgy, attractive mix that perch cannot resist.



10 Drop it over your spot to form an attractive cloud.



WORM TIP 3

Try tipping off your worm or half worm with a castor; this not only adds attraction and may pick out a bigger fish, it also stops the worm from wriggling off your hook!

SIMPLE LEGER RIG

A buffer bead protects your hook knots and prevents tangles.

A small swivel tied to a piece of light mono allows you to add shot until you have the right amount to hold bottom.

SIMPLE WAGGLER RIG

Waggler, either loaded or with bulk shot either side to aid casting.

Shot placed three-quarters of the way down in a strung-out pattern to give the worm a natural fall through the water.

Fish slightly overdepth.

Don't be afraid to use a large hook to fish for river chub and perch with a lobbie.

OUT
NOW!

THINK FISHING

WITH DES SHIPP



MONTHLY ONLINE VIDEO MAGAZINE

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WITH DEEPER TO GIVE
AWAY TWO COMPLETE
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COARSE
FISHING

HOW TO ENTER

To stand a chance of winning one of these awesome prizes just call **09012 932307** and answer the question below. Good luck and tight lines!

Q: What are the scanning angles of the Deeper sonar?

Find the answer at www.buydeeper.com!

A: 15°/55° **B:** 55°/95° **C:** 35°/125°

Terms and conditions

The competition runs from midday on Wednesday, **December 9th, 2015**. Calls cost £1 plus your phone company's access charge. Please obtain permission from whoever pays your telephone bill. You can also enter by post. Put your answer on a postcard or sealed-down envelope, along with your name, address, e-mail and daytime telephone number, and send it to: Deeper Competition, Coarse Fishing Answers, 1 Whittle Close, Drayton Fields, Daventry, Northants NN11 8RQ. Postal entries must be received five days before the closing date. The winner will be selected at random from all correct entries received by 11am on Wednesday, **January 13th, 2016**. This competition is open to UK residents only. The editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.



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- Dual-frequency beam – narrow (290 kHz (15°)); wide (90 kHz (55°))
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- Depth range – maximum 130 feet (40 metres); minimum – wide/narrow angle – 4.3 feet (1.3 metres)/two feet (0.5 metres) Fresh water, saltwater and ice fishing operation
- Up to six hours of rechargeable battery life
- Operational temperature: minus 4F to 104F/minus 20°C to 40°C
- Micro USB power adaptor
- Small and ultra light - weighs only 0.22lb/100g

WHAT YOU GET:

- Deeper smart fishfinder, USB wire, mini pouch, two attachment bolts, user manual and quick guide, safe usage and regulations.

APP FEATURES:

- Depth sounder/fishfinder; real-time GPS mapping; ice fishing mode; night fishing mode
- Depth information; water temperature; bottom structure and contour; vegetation; fish location
- Solunar calendar; camera function; weather centre; social media sharing availability; history button



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BROWNING
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GEAR

Looking for top tackle? We've got it covered.



01

SENSAS C.B.14 READY HOOKER PELLETS

Price: £2.49

www.sensasmatch.co.uk

It has taken two years of development to get these ready-to-use hooker pellets ready for the market but it has been worth the wait.

C.B.14 expanders have been extensively field-tested to make sure that the texture and leakage of these hookers is absolutely spot-on. The result is a pellet that is both soft in texture but firm enough to stay securely on

the hook. If you split one in half you will also see that it is impregnated right to the core with attractant.

There are many flavours available in the range, with the smaller sizes of pellet being great for F1s and skimmers, while larger baits are perfect for carp and larger bream and tench.

We'd recommend using these pellets on commercials, especially venues that are fished heavily and the fish have become wise to conventional pellets. Also, don't discount them on natural waters.

FLAVOURS

C.B. 14 Ready Expander Natural
C.B. 14 Ready Expander Spicy Meat
C.B. 14 Ready Expander Garlic
C.B. 14 Ready Expander Strawberry
C.B. 14 Ready Expander Halibut
C.B. 14 Ready Expander Pineapple

SIZES

4mm, 6mm, 10mm

TESTED

BROWNING MAXI-LITE SEATBOX

BROWNING MAXI-LITE SEATBOX

Price: £399

www.zebcos-europe.com

You won't find many seatboxes on the market more sturdy than the Maxi-Lite from German match specialists Browning.

I took the Maxi out for an afternoon's waggler fishing on a local lake to see if German engineering had made the transition from cars to seatboxes and I didn't leave disappointed.

The whole make-up of the Maxi-Lite is geared towards a solid design and simple to use, functional parts.

First up, the box's legs are robust and I felt very comfortable despite a muddy, uneven peg. What's better is the box incorporates a spirit level so that you can adjust your legs

perfectly, saving your back and allowing you to fish effectively.

There's ample storage for all your rig bits, such as pole winders, floats and feeders, and the pull out, deep tray clicks onto the box so that it doesn't fall out in transit.

If it's strength and performance you're after and a box that will last you years, then I'd certainly go for the Maxi-Lite. COARSE FISHING

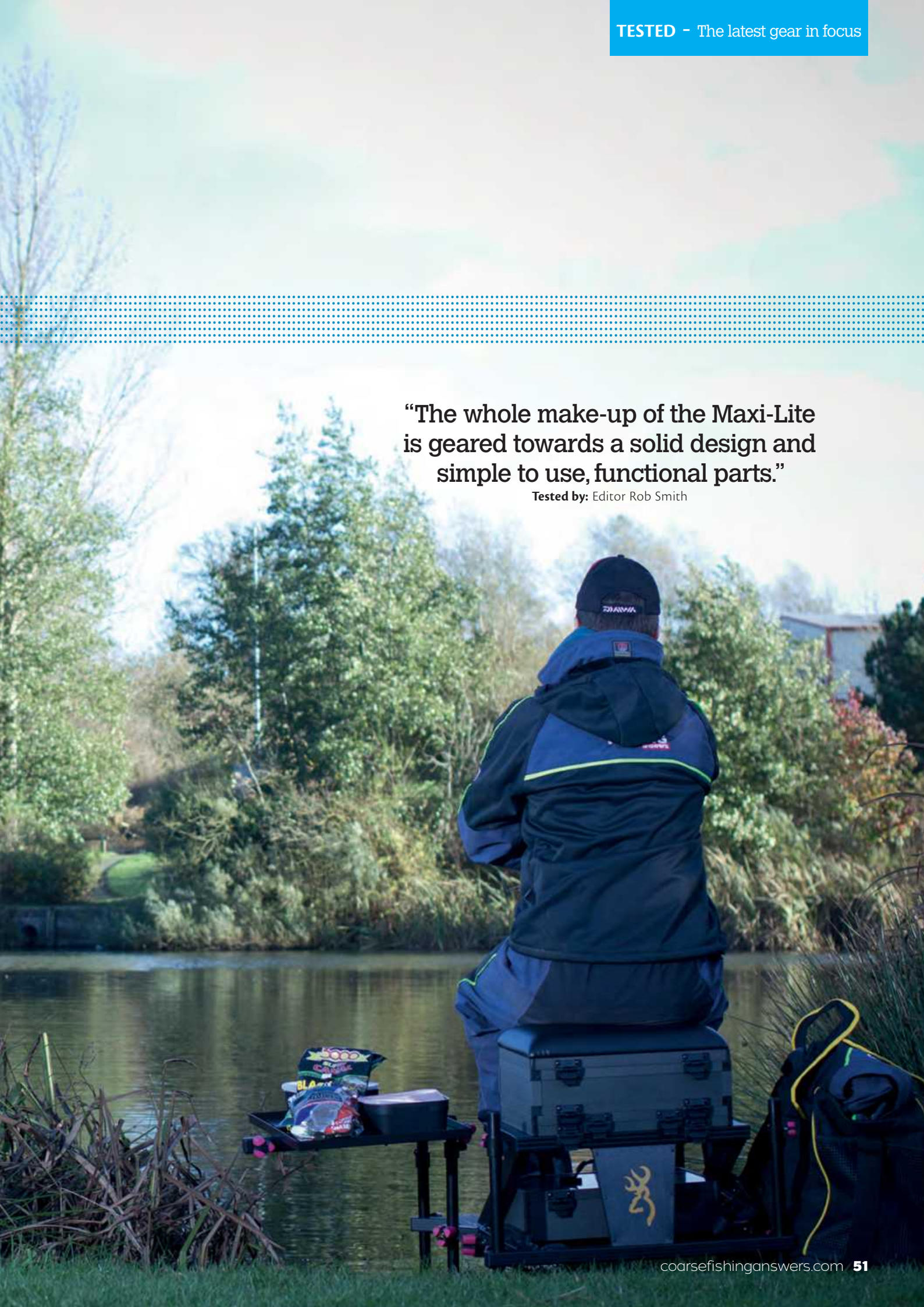
TECH SPECS

- Modern fast and progressive actions
- Under-seat, 35mm-deep, side-opening side-opening drawer
- 20mm single-layer winder trays, complete with double slide-type pole winders
- 80mm-deep tray
- Tray lid unit
- Multi-adjustable legs



“The whole make-up of the Maxi-Lite is geared towards a solid design and simple to use, functional parts.”

Tested by: Editor Rob Smith



02



03



04



05



02

PALLATRAX GRIPZ HOOKS

Price: £4.50
www.pallatrax.co.uk

A series of horizontal grooves on the inside of the hook point make these a great alternative to barbed hooks while offering more security than barbless.

The grooves hold the hook securely in the fish's mouth, giving you a firm hook-hold. However, once the pressure is eased, the hook can be safely released, preventing damage. Available in size 6, 8 and 10 in Pallatrax's Teflon-coated, wide-gape style.

03

KORUM LANDING-NET COMBO

Price: £34.99 to £39.99
www.korum.co.uk

These fresh new specimen nets are designed with big fish in mind – use them for bream, carp, barbel, tench and pike fishing.

The net is available in 36in and 42in versions, with the bigger one better suited to carp and pike fishing.

Features include a reinforced spreader block, with a two-piece handle that breaks down to become the exact same size as the net, meaning easy storage at home and on your way to the lake or river. These are great nets if you're on the move and they come with a stink bag, keeping your car, other tackle and house clean and smell-free after a session.

04

CRAFTY CATCHER TIP OFFS HOOK BAITS

Price: £2.99
www.copdockmill.co.uk

These Tip Offs are super-buoyant, dual-coloured hook baits and are great for zig and snowman presentations.

Flavours include White Krill, Sweet Pineapple, Sweet Bubblegum and Sweet Coconut. These will help catch both large and small carp; well worth a go.

05

SHAKESPEARE AGILITY EXP 12FT SPECIMEN ROD

Price: £59.99
www.shakespeare-fishing.co.uk

The four-piece Agility Specimen in 2lb test curve is aimed at the angler who wants to travel light and get onto fish at the drop of a hat. Use it for carp fishing, especially surface fishing, and heavy barbel work on large rivers like the Trent and Severn. It's also great for long-range bream and tench angling because it has that backbone needed to get your baits out at range.

The rod has a progressive action and comes fitted with zirconium oxide guides and a carp-style DPS reel seat.

06



08



07



09



06

MAVER REACTORLITE 2000 REEL

Price: £69.99

www.mavermatch.co.uk

Perfect for large commercial venues, casting leads, feeders and Methods to the horizon. Suitable for feeder, float and spin work. The spools are cold-forged aluminium for long-term durability and the paint applied to the body has a special rubberised finish. For simple and effective lubrication there is a single port. Simply remove one screw to lubricate.

07

MATRIX SUPER 36 SEATBOX

Price: £649.99

www.fishmatrix.co.uk

This is the stunning flagship seatbox built using the highly respected Matrix drawer units and is a great addition to its range. Features include large-diameter 36mm legs with 25mm telescopic inners, a lightweight aluminium frame and an anodised gunmetal finish.

A deeper, lower frame provides more leg contact for stability and it fits all Matrix tray and drawer units.

08

DYNAMITE CARP PELLETS

Price: Contact your tackle shop

www.dynamitebaits.com

You can buy these pellets in 2mm, 4mm, 6mm, 8mm and 11mm and they are widely respected by match anglers across the country.

The low oil content makes them great for the fish and fishery. You can soak them for a few minutes to make them soft and they will also sink easily. Ideal for potting in, using in a groundbait mix, on a Method feeder or on the hook.

You can prepare the pellets easily and to soak them through you simply cover them in water for a couple of minutes and then drain it off, allowing them to stand on a riddle or in a fine landing net head.

09

WYCHWOOD DPF-15 LINE

Price: £12.99

www.wychwoodcarp.co.uk

This low-diameter monofilament main line features a fluorocarbon coating, helping it hug the lake bed.

It is also UV pigmented to keep it unobtrusive and is supplied on 1,000m spools. Available in 10lb, 12lb, 15lb and 18lb breaking strains.



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CAN YOU HELP ME CATCH A LARGE CHUB?



We join Korum's Roman Buczynski on the riverbank to find out how he goes about targeting a specimen chub.



CFA EXPERT

Name: Roman Buczynski

Hometown: Oxford

Sponsor: Korum

HOW TO... SET UP ROMAN'S SIMPLE CHUB RIG



1 Slide a Korum Feedabead onto your reel line.



2 Follow this with a Korum Dura-Bead.



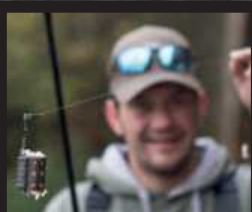
3 Tie on the Dura-Clip to your reel line.



4 Clip your chosen feeder onto the Feedabead.



5 Attach your hook link to the Dura-Clip and cover with a short anti-tangle sleeve.



6 Fill your feeder, attach your hook bait and catch a chub!

HOW TO... CREATE ROMAN'S STINKY CHUB BREAD MIX



1 These are all the ingredients needed for the bait mix.



2 Add the liquidised bread to a bucket.



3 Pour Mainline Hemp Stick Mix in.



4 Pour a good helping of Sonubaits Cheesy Garlic Crush into the bucket.



5 Add a handful of crumbed boilies to the mix.



6 Sonubaits Hemp is the next bait to be added.



7 A good squirt of Mainline Liquid Pellet is the last thing to be included.



8 Give it all a good mix and you'll have a super-stinky chub mix.

Winter is the perfect time of year to target big chub. These big blocks of silver are not only known for being greedy, they're also one species that will feed however cold the weather gets. If you need to get a fishing fix when everywhere is frozen, get down to your local river! Big chub can often live in very tiny waters, so just because you don't live next to a big river doesn't mean there won't be any big

chub. Check out local clubs and their websites and ask in your local tackle shop. You may be surprised just how big the chub are in your local river.

So where do you start when targeting a river? After buying a club ticket, I'll often spend time walking the river, sometimes without my tackle. You can look for likely looking spots, snags or overhangs and this will save you time when you reach the river with your rods.

Chub love sitting at the back of the snags and tucked right under overhangs. You've just got to persuade them to come out and eat!

WHAT GEAR?

There's nothing complicated about the rigs, tackle or bait for catching chub. I use a simple running rig with a small feeder and 2ft hooklength. That's as difficult as it gets. My rod is a 12ft Korum Feeder coupled with a KMR



The rig bits needed to tackle up for big chub.



reel loaded with 6lb line. This longer rod gives me the ability to lever fish away from snags, whether in the river or marginal snags. I've opted to use the heavier 1½oz tip for all of my chub fishing. This tip is better in the flow of the river.

Sliding on the reel line is a Korum Feedabead. This sliding clip allows me to quickly change the size or weight of my feeder, depending what is happening with the fishing. If I need to add

more weight due to increased flow, I can do it without tacking down the whole rig! I'll stop the Feedabead with a Dura-Bead, which allows the quick changing of my hooklength. The hook link is 60 centimetres of 0.17mm Reel Power, or 4lb Xpert Power Mono if the river is running low, tied directly to a size 8 Xpert Specialist hook. This makes a super-simple chub rig that I can use in any river conditions!

Feeder size is all dependent on the flow. If the

river is low my first choice will be a mesh feeder. The extra holes allow the bread to easily exit the feeder to pull the chub up to my hook bait. If the river is running fast, or the swim is deep, I will opt for an open-ended feeder. This will hold the bait in the feeder for longer, making the feed last longer in the fast flow.

BAITING UP

Bread makes up the base of my bait. For a full →

day's fishing two loaves are all I need. The night before I plan on fishing is spent preparing the bait. I'll stick one whole loaf into a blender until it has been chopped into tiny pieces. This gives me enough liquidised bread to form the main part of my mix. Mainline Baits Hemp Stick Mix, Sonubaits Cheesy Garlic Crush, Sonubaits Natural Hemp, Mainline Liquid Pellet and crushed boilies all add to the pulling power of the mix, creating a stinky bed of highly visible bait for the chub to find.

Before fishing in a swim I'll bait up with a couple of small handfuls of the bread mix, giving the chub time to work up the swim to my bait. I will spend some time at the start of my session walking along the stretch I intend to fish, putting bait into a few likely spots along the way.

I have three options for hook baits – paste,

breadflake and lobworms. Chub love them. I'll start with breadflake. This is a highly visible bait and the chub will quickly grab a piece floating around in the flow. Rip off a chunk the size of a 50p piece from a slice, fold the edge over and slide your hook into the bread before folding it around the shank to secure it; this will help the bread stay on for longer!

A lobworm can be great but might sometimes attract the attention of small perch if they are in the swim. These big worms can often produce a bite on the most difficult of days and it's always worth putting a tub into your bag.

WHERE TO FISH?

Once you've sorted your tackle and bait it's time to get fishing! Look for swims with plenty of cover to hold fish. Weir pools, deep holes and

big overhanging bushes will be good spots to target. If these features are on the nearside bank you can use this to your advantage. Cast tight to the edge of the overhang or snag and hold the line tight. The feeder should swing on a tight line, being pushed under the overhang by the flow of the river. You can then place your rod on the rest, knowing that your feeder is sat nearer to where the chub feel comfortable to feed.

I'll recast the feeder every 20 minutes. This will keep a steady stream of bait going through the swim, pulling the chub further out of the snags and hopefully to your hook bait!

I'll be looking to spend a maximum of 45 minutes to one hour in each swim. If you've not had any indication of a fish being present within this time, up sticks and try another swim! If a chub is at home, you should get a bite pretty soon.

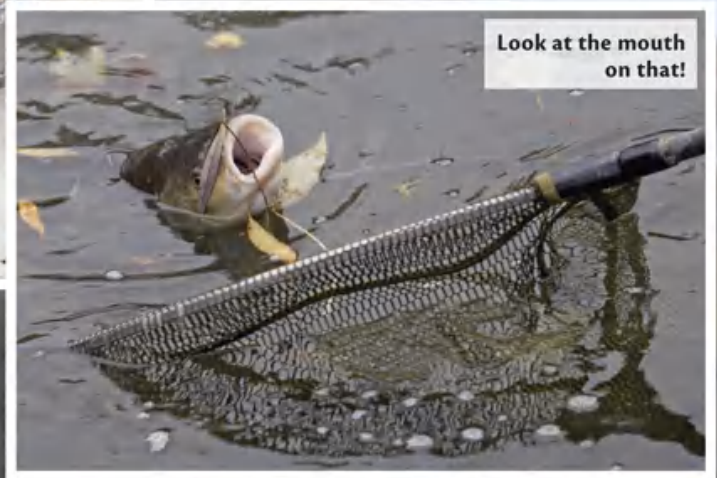
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Roman's happy with that! A lump of a chub puts a smile on his face.

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KORUM

CAPTURE

Big fish, big prizes in our brand-new top fish competition!



Want to win the tackle that our Korum experts use? Each month we're sending a top Korum angler out on the bank to catch a shedload of fish, then you get the chance to win the tackle they used – it's as simple as that!

Top speci expert Roman Buczynski gives us

the lowdown on big river chub and how to catch them in this month's Korum Capture feature and our three lucky winners will each receive items of tackle that Roman uses to tempt his monster chub.

Next month we'll be out with another Korum angler and to win his tackle all you need to

do to enter is fire us an e-mail to catch-club@dhpuk.co.uk with a picture of your catch, name, weight of fish and venue. It can be a huge bag of fish or a monster single specimen, so what are you waiting for? Get out there on the bank and get catching! We're really looking forward to seeing your captures.

GOLD

What they win...

12ft Feeder Rod, KMR Reel, Xpert Reel Line 6lb, Two Mesh Feeders, Korum Dura-Beads.



SILVER

What they win...

12ft Feeder Rod, Two Mesh Feeders, Korum Dura-Beads.



BRONZE

What they win...

Two Mesh Feeders, Korum Dura-Beads, Two Packets Of Xpert Specialist Hooks.



SIMON LEE

Catch: 4lb 8oz chub

Venue: River Welland



GREGORY DAVIES

Catch: 17lb pike

Venue: River Severn



EMMA FARR

Catch: 7lb 8oz ghost carp

Venue: Northam Farm

How To Enter

There are a number of ways to enter. You can e-mail us at catch-club@dhpublish.co.uk and send your pic, name, address and telephone number, plus the weight and venue where you tempted the fish.

Also make sure you check us out on Facebook

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where we'll be promoting the competition; here you can simply fire over your catch shot when you spot our promotion – it's as simple as that!

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KORUM

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Who's inside!

TONY CURD

DARREN COX

DES SHIPP

MATT GODFREY

STU REDMAN



CFA EXPERT

Name: Tony Curd
Hometown: London
Sponsors: MAP, Bait-Tech

HOW DO I CATCH F1S IN COLD WEATHER?

MAP ace Tony Curd delves into the intriguing world of F1s and shows us that they can be caught all year round. How does he do it? Let's find out...

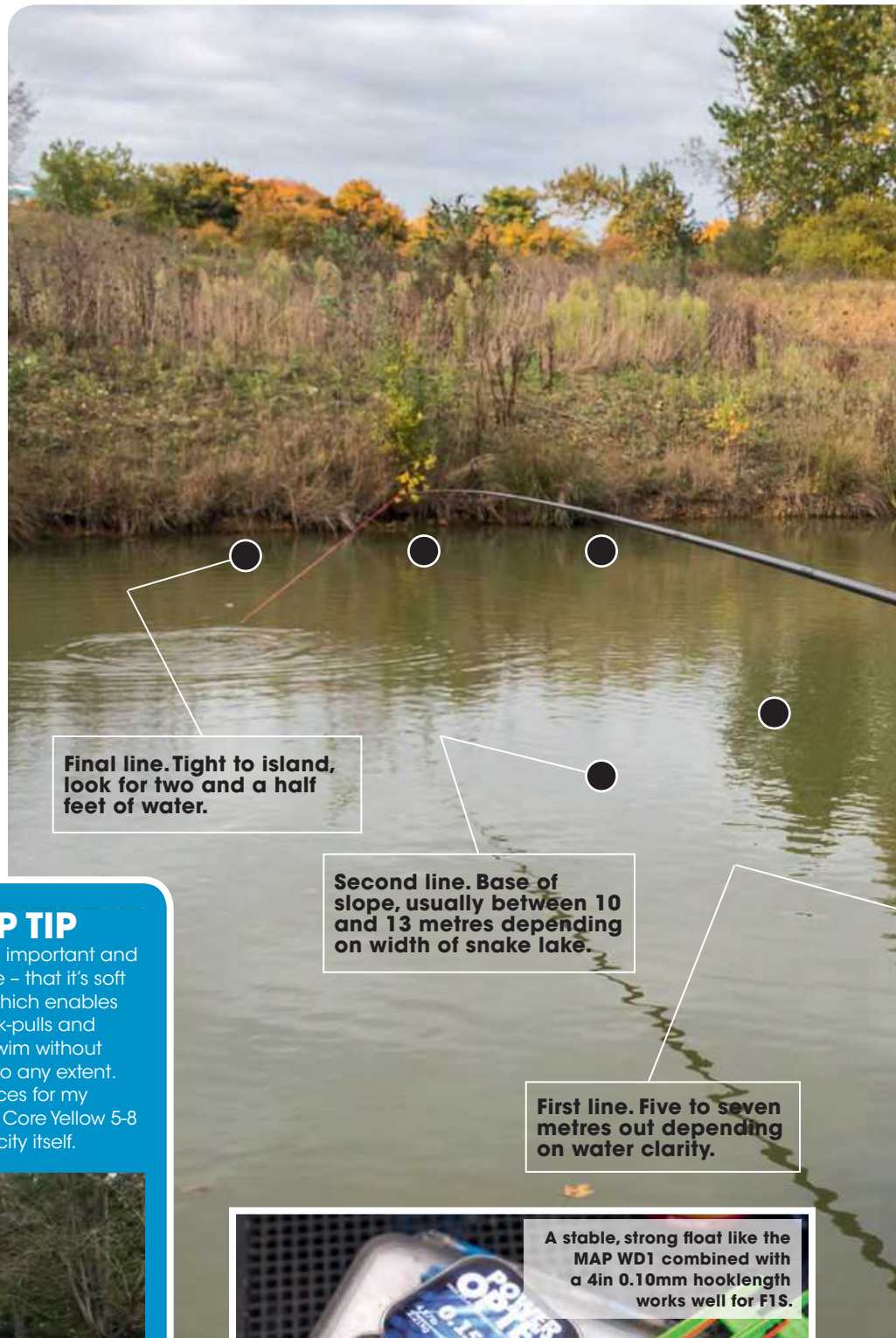
As winter's vice-like grip gets its hands firmly around our nation's commercial venues, they now take on a very different landscape from what we have been used to seeing throughout the summer and autumn months. Frosts give those platforms a glisten in the bright morning sunshine and the water's so clear you can see the end of your keepnet. I love this time of year, even more so in recent years due to the introduction of the pocket-sized F1 – a hybrid species of carp that was designed with year-round competition fishing in mind.

They still feed in the coldest conditions; these little beauties are certainly obliging in virtually all the harshest conditions we are likely to face and offer a massively enjoyable day once you get your tactics right! Most anglers carefully feed just a few pellets or maggots but I feel that you can use the clear-water conditions to your advantage to draw more fish by using a groundbait approach alongside pellets. It's a method that I've used for a few years, with lots of winter success.

KEEP YOUR OPTIONS OPEN

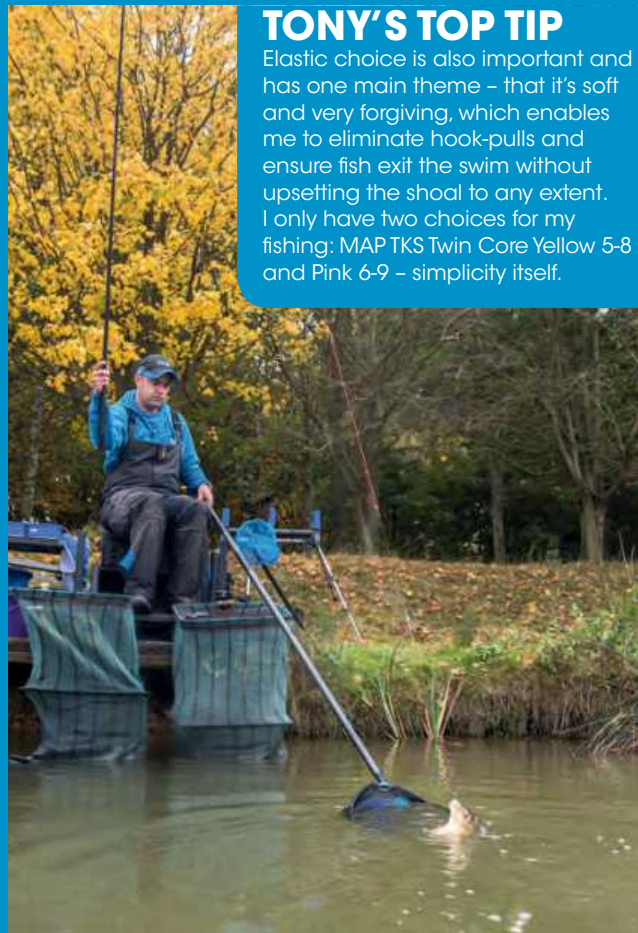
Where many anglers go wrong when targeting F1s is that they don't give themselves enough swim options. I've found three areas at the same range and depth for each of my rigs. Often with F1s you can fish one area out and they will never return, try as you might. However, move three feet or so either way and you're straight back into fish. They are strange, mysterious and fascinating creatures!

The first swim is a short line. This can often be great to start your session on. It's almost the reverse of summer, where you start long and catch loads close in later. In winter it's start short and get everything out of the



TONY'S TOP TIP

Elastic choice is also important and has one main theme – that it's soft and very forgiving, which enables me to eliminate hook-pulls and ensure fish exit the swim without upsetting the shoal to any extent. I only have two choices for my fishing: MAP TKS Twin Core Yellow 5-8 and Pink 6-9 – simplicity itself.





Pre-tie your hooklengths to save time on the bank.

Adding groundbait to your standard pellet attack will give you the edge.

Three feet between spots, start them off with a small cup of bait.

Tony catches from many different areas throughout the day.

swim, working your way across. The short line, depending on the clarity of the water, should be anywhere from five to seven metres from the bank. This gives you a good depth, which gives the fish confidence and hopefully sees them stick around for a while for prolonged bites.

The second line is somewhere to move once you have drained your close-in area for all it's worth. Because the majority of F1 venues are snake-type lakes, I usually position this at the base of the far slope, again in two or three areas, simply finding the same depth with your plummet. It is literally like starting again once one swim dies and no swim is prepped before fishing it. Kicking it off with just a small pole-mounted pot, typically this line is anything from

10 to 13 metres, depending on the width of the lake you're fishing. I'm at 13 metres.

The final line is fished across to the island. This is, from a match angler's point of view, the most important. Timing it right when to go onto it is massively important because it is crucial to save this for as long as possible to finish strongly in the later stages of the match. One of the most important things to get right when choosing where to fish across is the depth. Again, in summer you would simply fish as tight to the bank as possible, but I find it a far more effective operation to set the float to the depth you want to fish before you pop a plummet on, then find that depth – regardless of how far away from the island it may be. Depth is

far more important than cover during winter. Keep that in mind and you'll not go far wrong! I usually look for at least two and a half feet of water for this line, with three feet being the optimum depth for cold-water F1s.

SIMPLE RIGS

My rigs are quite simple affairs but focus around a few key things that I feel make a big difference to their performance. For fishing in the deep water on the short line and my line off the far shelf the rigs are very similar in make-up. Starting with the main line, I have 0.15mm MAP Power Optex. Now this may seem heavy to many but it's the part of the rig that will take the most hammer throughout →



Tony was straight into fish on his short line.

Golden F1s like this give great sport through the winter months.

a session or match due to moving the float around on it and also a number of small shot. What is also key is that a heavier main line will sit straighter in the water and won't be badly affected by the wind, causing the float to be dragged out of position unnecessarily.

The floats are my all-time favourite MAP WD1s. These are perfect for F1 fishing and feature a wire stem for fantastic stability. Size is all important too and it's a good policy to use the lightest float you can get away with in the given conditions. Ideally, though, in four to six feet I'd favour a 4x14 and in two to four feet a 4x12 will be ample. The 4x14 on my deeper rigs for the feature were shotted with a strung bulk of No10 shot starting from the hooklength

connection, spaced at 1 in intervals.

The hooklength is very important and is made up on 0.10mm MAP Power Optex line but is only four inches long. The best in the business at F1 fishing all seemed to use these short hooklengths and I had to give it a go – a complete revelation! Because your last shot is a lot nearer to the hook you're able to see a lot of little lifts and get more positive indications on the float, which isn't possible with 6 in hooklengths. Such are the thin dividing lines between success and failure when targeting this species. The hooklength is finished off with a nice fine-wire size 18 808, perfect for mounting a 4mm Bait-Tech Xpand pellet.

As I touched on, the conditions can be

harsh in winter, so it's good practice to leave a decent length of line between the pole and float to stop the motion of the wind blowing your pole around and moving the rig too much. To combat missed bites I like to place several No8 back shot along this length of line, which keeps everything straight and, more importantly, tight!

BAIT AND FEEDING

The single most important thing to get bang on! The first thing you need to understand about F1s is that less is more, but that's not to say you shouldn't feed regularly. My approach centres around using the clearer water found in winter to my advantage by using a groundbait mix alongside the standard pellet approach. My number-one mix at the moment is Bait-Tech F1. It's full of crushed expanders, has a fine, fluffy texture and a nice dark brown colour, which makes it perfect for this method. I use this in two ways. The first is to mix it with soaked 2mm Bait-Tech Carp & Coarse Pellets. I find one big handful into one pint of prepared pellets to be perfect. With this you'll find the groundbait 'dilutes' the pellets, seeing fewer of them introduced but with maximum attraction of a nice cascade of cloud going through the water acting as a true magnet for clear-water F1s!

The second way is for when you're on a lot of fish and they cause you problems with missed bites when potting the mix loose. By simply squeezing small marble-sized pieces and potting them in over your float you will find that the fish will settle down on the deck again, giving you those positive bites you require. Hook baits are nearly always 4mm Bait-Tech Xpand pellets, but I have had a lot of success with the 2mm versions



Bait couldn't be simpler – a bag of Bait-Tech F1 groundbait and a bag each of 2mm and 4mm Bait-Tech Carp & Coarse Pellets.

on the coldest of days.

How to start a swim off is something that most struggle with and the big mistake is feeling you need to prep a line before fishing it. To start any of my swims it's a simple case of loading my hook and then filling a small MAP Flexi Pot with my groundbait and pellet mix and tipping it over my float. Feeding a small amount every put-in, the fish will tell you whether you need more or less. If you get loads of bites then keep the amount the same, but if you don't get the desired response it's time to cut it right back to as little as eight micros and a pinch of crumb at times.

My session took place at the fantastic Stepfield Lake at the Coleman's Cottage complex in Essex. Kicking off with just a single

small pot of feed on my first short line I was straight into fish, with a string of perfectly conditioned, golden F1s making their way into the net. After an hour or so I simply put my plummet on again and found the same depth four feet to the left of my initial line and started again. I caught immediately, doing the same again to the right shortly after until the short line was finished – a great way of prolonging your swim!

Moving onto the 13m line, this was my best line of the day, with the fish being very well settled here, which goes to show that on any given day they want to be in a certain depth. Once you find them it can be bite-a-chuck action! I ended up with a fantastic haul of F1s, well over the magical 100lb barrier and a red-

FISH IT!

Stepfield Lake at
Coleman's Cottage,
Little Braxted Lane,
Witham, Essex
CM8 3EX

W: www.colemansfisheries.co.uk

letter day for the time of year. Next time you're out on the banks of your local F1-rammed commercial give this approach a try. It will soon become 'clear' that it's a true winner!

COARSE FISHING



Tony had a session to remember, with well over 100lb of F1s on tactics you can easily master – not a bad way to stay warm this winter!

COMMERCIAL TACTICS... EXPLAINED

THE BOMB

TIME OF YEAR?

Now! This is the time to get the bomb out and take your local commercial apart.

WHERE?

Open water works best for this tactic. Carp love to sit in the deeper water as the temperature drops.

WHAT BAIT?

Hair-rigged or banded pellets work well but also take sweetcorn, 10mm boilies and meat with you as change baits.

DO I FEED?

We advise feeding a small amount of bait over your spot. If you're fishing pellets, maybe four or five every 10 minutes, but make sure you're accurate - you don't want to spread the bait and move the fish away from your hook bait.

WHAT TACKLE?

Go strong! There's no place for really light tackle here, make sure your gear is up to the job. A medium/heavy, 12/13ft feeder rod and a 4000/5000-sized reel loaded with 10lb main line will do the job.

The crucial skills needed to bag up on a commercial.



HOW TO MAKE THE KILLER RIG...

You'll need this little lot to construct your rig:

TOP TIP

Try a highly visible, pop-up boilie as a change bait. A white or fluoro yellow bait will work well in both round and dumbbell shapes.



1 Slide your running feeder link onto your main line and attach your lead.



2 Next, slide on a small buffer bead to protect your knot and prevent your rig tangling.



3 Next up tie on a swivel and push your bead over the knot to protect it.



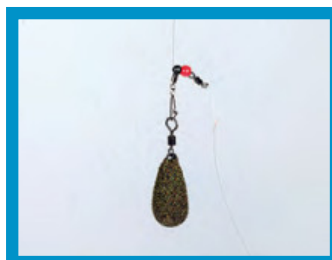
4 Tie a loop in your hooklength and slide it through the swivel.



5 Pass your hook and hooklength back through the loop.



6 Pull the loop tight against the swivel.



7 Add your lead and you can see the bead and swivel acts as a boom, stopping tangles.



8 Tie a knotless knot with a hair rig but don't forget to add your band into the loop of the hair.



9 A band is perfect for holding a pellet, a great straight-lead hook bait.

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Words and photos: **Steve Martin**

HOW DO I CATCH MORE FISH ON THE FEEDER THIS WINTER?

Darren Cox looks at the two styles of feeder fishing you need to master if you want to put more fish in your net over the winter months.

**CFA EXPERT**

Name: Darren Cox

Hometown: Stratford-upon-Avon

Sponsors: Garbolino

The onset of winter ushers in a transformation in many commercial fisheries because the cold water conditions start to affect how the fish feed – the amount they eat and how often. In fact, the colder the water, the shorter the period of time that fish such as carp and bream will feed during the day. The afternoon is often the best time to catch, especially on mild winter days, when any heat will have added a little warmth to the water, which can spark a period of intense feeding for a few hours before dark.

The cold also affects the water clarity and to protect themselves against predation, fish will move out into deeper water and shoal up for safety. All these factors often mean that they are not best to catch on pole or waggler, so the best tactic is to turn to the feeder.

Darren Cox has fished for the England Feeder Team, and he knows a few tricks when it comes to catching a bag of fish on the feeder from some of the UK's top commercial venues. We joined him for a session on the main lake at Barston Lakes in the West Midlands, a venue that hosts a number of matches during winter, many of which will be won by anglers fishing the feeder.

"Before we look at the feeder tackle that I'm going to use, it's important to talk about the swim," explained Darren, as he started to set up. "I've chosen this peg because there have been a few fish showing in the area in recent days. That's information that I got from the fishery owner, Nigel Harthy, after a quick chat when I arrived.

"It's all too easy to arrive at a venue and just sit in any swim, fish it, and blank because there were no fish there. I always try and glean information but if that's not possible I'll watch the water and look for signs of fish. If I see fish top or roll, then I'll head for that area because it's clear that they are there."

Nigel's information was spot-on, and while Darren was setting up his two feeder rods, two fish rolled on the surface midway between his bank and the island in front of him.

"That's where my first cast is going then! I'm setting up two rods for this session; a 10ft bomb/light feeder to fish a cage-feeder setup and a 13ft rod for the Hybrid feeder. My plan is to fish with the smallest feeders that the conditions allow. By that I mean enough weight to hold it on the bottom against any tow.

"The smaller the better too, because I don't want to put too much feed into the water. The feed is there to attract the fish, not feed them.

"When feeder fishing in winter you have to look at what you feed in the same way as if you were fishing the pole. You are feeding for a bite, so on the pole you would feed a small nugget of groundbait or micros, and then fish over the top

WINTER FEEDER TIPS



1 Look to feed similar amounts with a feeder as you would when fishing the pole.



2 Use a Hybrid feeder with a lighter elastic when fishing with small hooks.



3 Dead red maggots are Darren's go-to hook bait to target fish on feeder tactics.

with, say, a grain of corn and wait for a bite.

"You wouldn't feed again. It's the same on the feeder, so a small-capacity cage or Hybrid feeder will feed just enough to put some taste in the water."

For his Hybrid-feeder setup, Darren had 5lb Maxima reel line, to which he had attached a shockleader of 8lb Technium, which gave added security against breakages on the cast. One of the key things about catching fish on the feeder in winter is accuracy.

"You are often fishing against the elements in winter, such as the wind, so if you want to be accurate you need to have the confidence to punch the feeder hard without the fear of snapping off. Line diameter is also an important factor. I could fish 8lb straight through but the line can get caught in a crosswind and create a big bow. A lower-diameter line cuts through the breeze better. And remember, always pick out a far-bank target to aim for and, when possible, clip up, because that helps to keep your casting accurate."

With that, Darren attached a 24g Guru Hybrid feeder, fitted with white elastic, to the loop in his shockleader and added a short 0.18mm Garbo Line hook link with a size 20 barbless Drennan Carp Feeder hook.

For his cage-feeder setup he had fitted a soft, fibreglass tip and explained that, unlike with the Hybrid or Method, when you are waiting for a powerful pull round or drop-back bite on the bolt-style setup, the line runs free through the feeder link, so you are looking for the slightest movement when a fish takes the bait. He also added that there was no need to use a shockleader when fishing short distances.

The rest of his traditional feeder setup consisted of 4lb Maxima reel line, a free-running metal cage feeder holding 15g to 20g and a 450mm 0.12mm Garbo Line hook link with a size

18 Kamasan B911 hook.

"I will start with a fairly long hook link but if I'm not hitting bites (ragged baits), I'll shorten up until I get positive takes."

The hook baits and feed you fish will play a big part in the success or failure of a winter feeder session, and a quick look at Darren's bait tray revealed a certain lack of big baits for the hook.

"I'm a great believer in small hook baits during the winter months, and dead red maggots are my number-one choice when fishing the feeder. I will also fish with a small hair-rigged grain of corn or a small, bright boilie when targeting carp or F1s on the Hybrid.

"It's dead reds mostly, single or double, on the cage feeder, but I will try fluoro pinkies, a piece of dendrabaena worm or a little redworm when skimmers are the main quarry."

It was also noticeable that Darren had very little feed prepared, maybe four pints of groundbait and three pints of dampened micros.

"Think about what I said earlier about when you would feed on the pole line. You don't need a lot of feed. My cage-feeder mix is a dark, sweet-fishmeal recipe, which has a low food content. It basically puts a little smell in the water and acts as a carrier for some finely chopped worms – more taste from the amino acids – plus a few fluoro pinkies, which act as a visible attraction.

"I also add a few casters, which again don't offer much in the way of food, but will keep fish grubbing around once they find the feed. It's a complete winter mix for fishing commercial venues!

"The micros are perfect for the Hybrid when carp are the target but because there are plenty of skimmers in this lake I like to add a little of my groundbait, which will pull the silvers to the

WINTER FEED FACTS



1 Finely chopped worms add loads of taste when added to the cage-feeder feed.



2 Fluoro pinkies are highly visible in clear water, and will pull fish into your fishing mark.



3 Add a few pinkies and casters each cast, which stand out against the dark feed on the bottom.



4 A little groundbait in with the micros forms a column of taste as the feeder falls.



area too. The particles escape as the feeder falls, which adds to the scent in the water."

THE SESSION

To demonstrate the two styles, Darren started on the Hybrid feeder, casting his double dead red maggots around half-distance towards the island, dipping the rod tip under the water while the line sank. Then, once he had placed the rod

in the rest, he tensioned the line to place a slight bend in the tip.

"There's usually quite a bit of tow on the water, so you do get a lot of drop-back bites when fishing the Hybrid or Method. When a fish picks up the hook bait, the feeder gets dislodged and the pressure on the line caused by the tow moves it, which results in the tip movement. The pull by the tow on the feeder helps to set the

hook, so there's no need to strike.

"At the start of a session I will leave the first chuck in for between five and eight minutes. If the fish are there, I should get a bite in that time. If not, I will cast more often – every five minutes – for the next five chucks to get some feed down.

"However, if I don't get a bite in around 50 minutes, I would start looking elsewhere. If there are any signs, it pays to sit and wait for the bites →

to come."

The promising signs that the fish were around when Darren arrived proved to be a good omen because he caught a big F1 on the very first cast, which was followed by a stunning 15lb common carp that tested his 5lb reel line to its limit. A few small carp and F1s followed that monster before the bites slowed.

Darren decided it would be a good move to rest the line to allow the fish to regain the confidence to feed again. The number of casts he had made would have put down plenty of feed, which would keep the fish grazing around the area.

It took a while for the switch to the cage feeder on the shorter line to produce the first skimmer, with Darren casting a fresh feeder every three of four minutes. He continued to use the water's tow to his benefit as, once the feeder had settled, he placed the rod in the rest and allowed a bow to form, which put the tip under tension. He would then strike at the slightest rattle or drop back on the tip.

A few skimmers and small F1s followed but Darren pointed out that he was missing bites. His hook bait was coming back untouched but he was getting good indication on the tip. He surmised that the fish were attacking his feeder and not the hook bait, which he put down to fishing with a tightly packed feeder. He also felt that the small feeder he was using wasn't making enough noise when it landed on the water.

"I'm a firm believer that fish will come to the noise the feeder makes when it hits the water in winter, as well as in summer. I'm going to switch to a slightly bigger feeder and not pack the feed in so tightly, so that some of the feed falls out of the cage as it drops.

"Carp and skimmers don't just feed on the deck. More often they hang off the bottom and dip down to the feed, and then rise back up again. I expect the loose particles will spread the feed wider, so the fish will spread out more, as they feed."

That subtle change certainly made the difference because skimmers started to come more regularly, along with a few small carp and the odd perch.

Darren continued to rest each line to ensure that he didn't spook the fish with the constant casting over their heads – an important ploy, especially when the water is gin clear. He also caught plenty of skimmers on the Hybrid line, which turned up an hour or so after he first rested the line; a good indication as to how the low-feed micros will pull the fish to the area if you have the patience.

The session ended with Darren having caught a good 50lb of skimmers, F1s and small carp – plus the big common he caught earlier in the day. He was fishing before the really cold weather had arrived, but the Barston fish did still feel like a blocks of ice and the water was pretty cold, so it was still a good catch for the conditions.

FISH IT!

Barston Lakes

Marsh House Farm Lane, Barston,
Solihull, West Midlands B92 0LB
Day tickets: £8.50

Website: www.barstonlakes.co.uk

LOADING THE HYBRID FEEDER



1 Compress the micros into the frame of the feeder so that it leaves a slight depression in the feed.



2 Place the hook bait on a layer of feed, place the feeder over the top and compress it into the feeder.



3 The hook bait lies just below a thin layer of feed. It's quickly exposed as the pellets fall away.



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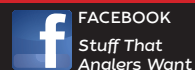


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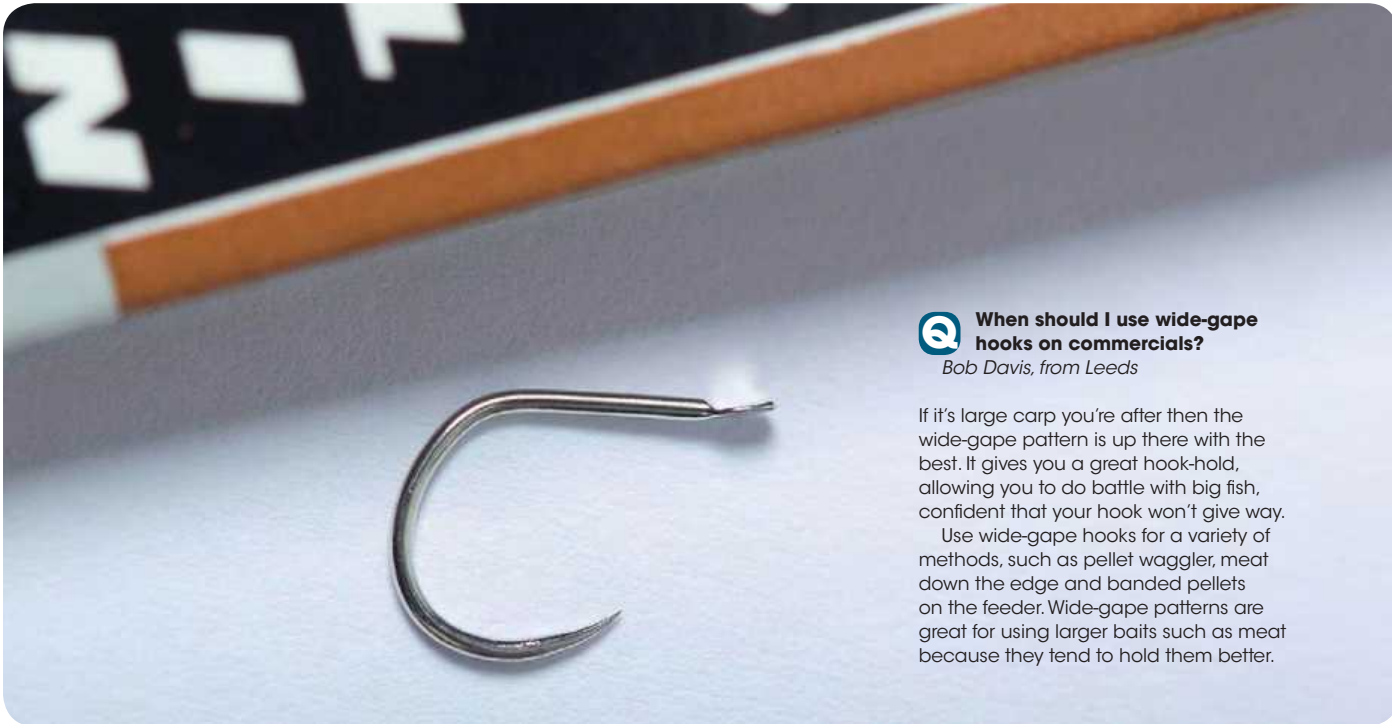


Q I keep getting bumped off when fishing for skimmers on the pole; what am I doing wrong?

David Turner, from Peterborough

This is a common problem, David, and it's usually to do with the strength of your elastic. We find that 4-6-rated elastic is more than enough to cope with skimmers. It's soft and forgiving on their soft mouths but there's still enough power to land them with ease.

Also, don't rush landing your fish. You're not in a match situation so take your time and wait until the fish is ready, because a fish shaking in close can throw the hook.



Q When should I use wide-gape hooks on commercials?

Bob Davis, from Leeds

If it's large carp you're after then the wide-gape pattern is up there with the best. It gives you a great hook-hold, allowing you to do battle with big fish, confident that your hook won't give way.

Use wide-gape hooks for a variety of methods, such as pellet waggler, meat down the edge and banded pellets on the feeder. Wide-gape patterns are great for using larger baits such as meat because they tend to hold them better.

Q When pleasure fishing a commercial, which areas would you target for winter carp?

Peter Bale from Gateshead

Look for deeper areas of the lake. These are usually in the centre of it but careful plumbing of your swim will reveal hidden holes. Even a subtle change in depth will be a good fish-holding feature. If you can't find any deep holes (some commercials are fairly shallow all over) then feed a few spots, such as open water, near shelf and far shelf; you'll then be able to find where the fish are once you start getting bites in a specific area.



Q How do I avoid roach when float fishing for carp with maggots?

Dave Green, from Birmingham

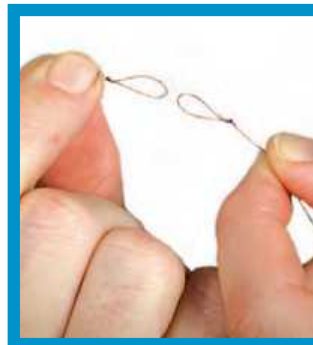
This can be a common issue on commercials, Dave. One way is to not use maggots. There are plenty of other baits out there that the roach will leave alone and carp are attracted to.

If you want to persist with maggots then you'll need to get them down to the bottom quickly to avoid the roach. The best way to do this is to use a carrier like groundbait. A stodgy mix works best because it gets to the bottom without breaking up through the layers and getting the roach going.

Q How do I tie my hooklength to my main line when pole fishing?

Tony Simpson, from Liverpool

There are a number of ways, Tony, but one of the easiest and most commonly used nowadays is the loop-to-loop, especially if you're buying pre-tied hooklengths that come with a loop.



1 Start with a loop in the main line and a loop in the hooklength.



2 Pass the main-line loop through the hooklength loop...



3 ... then run the hooklength through the main-line loop.



4 Pull the lines in opposite directions to lock the loops together.



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- Korum Reel Line
- Korum Bite Alarm
- Korum Bite Indicator
- Ready-tied Carp Rigs
- Feeders, Leads and End Tackle
- Banksticks and Butt Rest

WHAT'S THE CONE AND HOW DO I FISH IT?

Commercial expert Des Shipp has an interesting method for catching carp in the cold.

**CFA EXPERT****Name:** Des Shipp**Hometown:** Bristol**Sponsors:** Preston Innovations, Sonubaits

It's the same story that you regularly hear on every commercial in the country once the cold weather starts to impact on the fishing – the carp aren't feeding! Well... that's not entirely true, as the fish will feed – it's just that you have to locate them, and then find out where in the water they are as they won't necessarily be lying on the lake bed. →



Des was well into the carp once he found them.

FIND THE FISH

Deciding where to fish is key if you are going to catch, so it's really worth taking the time to talk to the fishery owner/bailiff when you arrive. Des had done just that and he had been told that the carp were shoaled up in a big ball in the middle of the lake, and that was soon confirmed by the splash of a few fish breaking

the surface to his right. It was a sign that would give any angler confidence but, having found the fish, would they feed?

BIG BAITS

At first glance the water looked coloured, but as Des dropped his keepnet in the water it became clear that a lot of colour had

dropped out of it. And as the cold slows down the fishes' metabolic rate, which means they feed less in the winter, he explained that the best baits to use would be large, visible ones that offered a big bite for little effort.

For this session he had brought 8mm carp pellets, sweetcorn, and a packet of Mattessons Smoked Pork Sausage. This, he commented, was great for hair rigging, and as it was slightly buoyant it had a slow sink rate, which gave the fish time to spot it as it fell through the water.

FREE-RUNNING LEAD

Carp in commercial venues don't just sit on the lake bed during the colder months; they tend to find the warmest water, which can be in the middle layers or even up on the surface on bright sunny days where the heat of a winter sun penetrates the upper layers, so to target these fish one of the best tactics is the bomb.

Des' rig is quick and simple to set up. In fact, he already had his rod made up in his ready-rod bag. A quick inspection showed he had a free-running 30g lead on a large Quick Change Bead. To this he had fixed an 18in hook link, to which he had tied a size 16 PR 38 with a Preston Innovations Rapid In-Stop, which are great when hair rigging soft baits.

The length of the hook link was key, as Des wanted his hook bait to fall slowly in the water



Winter carp are suckers for small amounts of soft pellets.

BAIT UP



1 Big, bold baits are a must when bomb fishing in the winter.



2 A long hair is essential when fishing large hook baits.



3 Using a baiting needle, push the In-Stop into the soft bait...



4 ...until it just pokes through, then pull back to lock the bait.

LOAD THE CONE



1 The cut-off from a pole bung makes a great mould.



2 Load the mould with plenty of the softened pellets.



3 Next, compress hard with the thumb and forefinger.



4 Push the feed cone from the mould on to a baiting needle.



5 Thread the cone on to the hook link via the loop at the top.



6 To finish, carefully push the cone down to the hook.



7 Reattach the hook link and you're set to go.

once the lead had hit the deck, so that the fish had time to react to the bait. He explained that he would fish a hooklength of between 12 and 24 inches, depending on the depth of water; the optimum length for him was 18 inches, but that would change depending on the frequency of the bites.

COMPRESSED FEED

Winter bomb tactics are usually fished with just a single bait cast around the swim until the fish are located. However, when you watch pole anglers fish in the colder months, they will often feed a small pot of micros, pinkies or groundbait, but no more, to help pull fish to the hook bait. This is also possible, with pellets at least, when fishing the bomb by adding a cone of feed above the hook bait before casting. This feed cone is a small amount of compressed, softened pellets, and is threaded on to the hook link. Once in the water it breaks down to leave a micro-patch of feed close to the hook bait that also gives off some taste to get the fishes' attention.

To create the cone a small amount of the soft feed is compressed into a mould, often formed by the cut-off portion of a pole bung. This is then pushed out of the mould and threaded on to the hook link with a baiting needle. It's then gently pulled down, so that it sits above the hook, ready to cast. A quick →



A hair-rigged bait gives Des a good hook-hold.

look explained why Des had gone for the 30g lead rather than a lighter bomb, considering the short distance he had to cast. A lighter weight would not cast the completely non-aerodynamic hook bait accurately but the extra weight compensated so that the bait hit its target every time.

FEED PREP IS KEY

Des used Sonubaits micro and 4mm carp pellets in his feed cones, and he explained that it was essential to get them soft enough so that they were still sticky, but not too soft that they become a mush when compressed. He added that the pellets needed to be prepared before the start of your session, but not the night before as that would result in an over-soft feed.

With the 4mm pellets, you are looking for them to become soft right through to the core, so that once you create the feed cone there are no hard bits to prevent the baiting needle from passing through, which could cause it to break off during the cast.

A WAITING GAME

Catching fish in the depths of winter is a stark contrast to the bag-up sessions we all enjoy during the summer. On the bomb especially,

it can be a waiting game, as even if you have located the fish, bites can take time to come. Des started his session by casting to different areas in front of him, recasting every 10 minutes until he started to get 'liners': an indication of fish bumping into his line, but not necessarily feeding.

Once he had located the fish he would leave the hook bait in the water for between 20 and 30 minutes, depending on whether the liners continued. And all the time his bait was in the water he was constantly surveying the water for any sign of fish movement.

ON THE DAY

Des' first fish came after about 45 minutes, and in that time he'd noticed that the fish had moved slightly to his right. This is something to be aware of when pleasure fishing, but not so much in a match; with more bodies around the lake the fish can move away. This could be down to a number of factors, one being the disturbance made by casting the heavy lead, or it could just be that the weather conditions move the warmer water

FISH IT!

Bait-Tech Viaduct Fishery
Cary Valley, Somerset TA11 6LJ
Contact: Steve or Paul on
01458 274022

Day ticket: £7 per day for one rod,
£9 for two rods

Info: www.viaductfishery.com

with the tow.

Des ensured he kept in touch with the fish by casting more to his right, and it was now that he started to add the feed cone to his rig. Even in the cold, carp will investigate the splash on the water – if it's close by – and by adding the extra smell and taste he was able to keep the odd fish interested.

Our star bagged a number of hungry carp during the session, but he had to be patient as the bites took up to 30 minutes to come. Over that time he chopped and changed his hook baits, fishing punched meat, two grains of corn or an 8mm pellet – every time with a cone of mixed micros and 4mm pellets on board, with the meat being the most successful bait on the day. **FISHING**



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Words and photos: **Rob Smith**

HOW CAN I BOOST MY **SNAKE-LAKE** CATCHES?

Snake lakes are basically commercial canals and every peg can look very similar. However, there are many ways to make your swim stand out, as Sensas expert Stu Redman explains.

**CFA EXPERT**

Name: Stu Redman
Hometown: Stamford
Sponsor: Sensas



As the CFA team walks through the gates of Janson Fishery, near Nottingham, they're greeted by the beaming smile of Sensas man Stu Redman, who can't wait to tell us the many little secrets he uses to unlock snakes lakes, just like the one he's on today.

Snake lakes are basically man-made pools that take the same shape as a

canal but instead of going straight they often bend round and link up to form a circle. Not all snake lakes are like this but the vast majority are, and that makes them great for targeting at this time of year – unlike in large lakes the fish in these intimate pools are within reach of a 13m pole, meaning they can't hide away in the middle of the lake, so they're never too far away from your bait. ➔

PLUMB IT

With this said there are still many things you can do to increase your chances of success. Firstly, Stu tells us that one of the most crucial aspects of fishing these snake lakes is plumbing up. "Far too many people drop down once or twice with a plummet and that's it, job done," says Stu. "But I like to spend a fair bit of time searching my peg for

any underwater features; it doesn't matter how small they might be, to the fish a small change in depth is massive in a water like this."

Stu hooks on his plummet and begins searching. "The temptation when pole fishing is to fish straight out in front of you but it pays to look right and left for features." He soon finds a small crater to his left, the size of a dustbin lid, that drops about one foot. "That's a great spot," smiles Stu, "and that'll be my main line of attack today!"

At this time of year this central track hotspot

will be the most likely area to produce the goods but don't neglect the margins; on narrow lakes like this the margins are patrolled regularly, and here at Janson it could be a carp, barbel, ide or chub to take your bait next – really exciting stuff!

To Stu's left he has the added bonus of an aerator in his margin, making an excellent place to drop a bait. Lastly he will have what he likes to call a 'throwaway line'; this will be to his right in open water and he will loose feed maggots here and drop in every now and again using his margin rig, which is great because it means you only need to make up two top kits for three lines of attack.

Back to the main line and Stu starts his session by feeding a small pole pot of hemp, →

Snake lake carp love casters, as Stu proves.



BAIT BOOST 1 - FLAVOURING YOUR MAGGOTS



1 Get yourself two buckets, two maggot riddles and a fine riddle.



2 Put your fine riddle on top of the first bucket, followed by the maggot riddle. Tip your maggots onto the riddle and shake through to clean.



3 Next tip the maggots back onto the maggot riddle and let them crawl through onto the finer riddle, further cleaning them.



4 You'll now be left with very clean maggots that will take on flavour much better.

There's nothing complicated about Stu's snake-lake setup.



A margin-caught carp can't escape Stu's waiting net.



5 Next up you'll need maize meal, along with your flavouring of choice. Stu likes cumin, chilli and turmeric, but only use one.



6 Tip your maggots into one of the buckets and add a handful of maize meal.



7 Then tip in some flavouring. Stu used turmeric today – you don't need much, it's strong stuff.



8 Give it a good mix and you'll be left with highly scented maggots that will give you the edge.

casters and softened 4mm green pellets.

"I don't like to dump bait during the winter," he continues. "Little and often is the way to go and I put a small pot of bait in every ship out; while I'm fishing my main line I'm also loose feeding casters into my margin swim and maggots onto the throwaway line."

RIGS

Stu keeps his rigs very simple, and in fact they are both the same. The only reason he is using two top kits is so that he doesn't have to change depths when switching between lines. His float is a 4x12 Sensas CCX1 that features a thick bristle, meaning he can dot the float right down. "With a long, thin tip you just don't see the bites. I dot these floats down by pinching a small No10 or No11 back shot halfway up the float tip on the line; you need to experiment by sliding this up and down until you find the right balance, you only need to see a very small portion of the float tip."

Stu's main line is 0.16mm Sensas Classic Power, with a 0.12mm Drennan Supplex hooklength down to a size 18 wide-gape hook. He positions seven No10s six inches from the hook and fishes with his bait at dead depth, but he is continually making slight alterations in depth throughout the day, to keep on the fish.

IN SESSION

In the first few hours Stu is catching well, with carp, barbel and ide coming at regular intervals, and the little-and-often approach is keeping fish in his swim. Double caster seems to be the best bait, but he isn't afraid to change to a single caster or double maggot to keep the fish on their toes. When hooked, all three species look to make for the cover of the island but Stu is one step ahead. By keeping his pole under the water and with a bit of side strain he is able to direct the aggressive fish away from structure.

"A No10 elastic is about right for fish of this size as it's got the power but also has that forgiveness needed to make sure you land more than you lose," he says, as he guides another carp over his landing net.

Stu likes to take a black marker pen to his float tips if he is finding it hard to see the standard red tip, and today this is really working well for him as he's able to detect even the smallest of movements on his float and convert these into fish on the bank.

Bites dry up on the main line after a good few hours of bagging so he decides to drop in on the margin line he has been feeding; first put-in and his fluoro maggot offering does the damage as an angry chub gives him the runaround. This is followed by a procession of carp and a barbel, further proving that by feeding multiple lines you're able to keep the bites coming throughout the day.

With a mixed bag of over 40lb recorded Stu is more than happy with his four-hour session; the tactics are simple and effective and we can all use them to catch more fish this winter.

BAIT BOOST 2 - FLUORO MAGGOTS



1 Take 1 pint of red maggots...



2 ... and pass them through a maggot riddle into a bucket.



3 You can see how much rubbish comes off the maggots, making it easier to add dye.



4 Buy some fluoro dye from your tackle shop - you'll find it in the carp section.



5 Tip a handful back into your maggot tub, add the clean maggots and shake thoroughly.



6 You are now left with an amazingly attractive pint of fluoro maggots that will grab the attention of snake-lake fish.



FISH IT!

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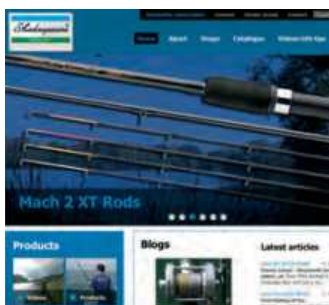
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www.tacklefanatics.co.uk

A great website where anglers can buy, sell or exchange any fishing items.



www.sheltonsangling.co.uk

A brilliant website to complement a superb tackle shop.



www.fishingtackle2go.co.uk

Some great bargains to be had on this easy to navigate website, catering for every area of fishing.



www.ultimate-direct.co.uk

A large tackle dealer with an extensive product range for all types of angler.



www.climaxtackle.com

The Climax website is updated daily with the latest deals and products from leading brands.



www.nathansofderby.co.uk

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www.nicksstackle.co.uk

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www.manorfarmfishing.co.uk

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www.fishinginthailand.com

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4

Must-Have Bag-Up Products

We've scoured the tackle shops of Britain to find you the four **MUST-HAVE** items to help you bag up this month. Boost your catch rate with the help of these little beauties...

01 **GURU** **REAPER FEEDER REST**

What We Think...

This "multi-positional specialist feeder rest", or rod rest as we like to call them, really has taken rod-rest design to the next level. The team at Guru has obviously given a lot of thought, time and effort into constructing the Reaper and what you're left with is a rod rest suitable for all your commercial feeder fishing needs.

Give the side arms a push and you can rotate them through 12 different settings, so no matter what angle you have your rods out at you'll be covered. The rest's high arms mean you can be sure your rod won't be pulled in the lake if you get a vicious take when fishing the Method, for example.

Small grooves mean your line can run freely and its strong, over-moulded design means the Reaper will be in your tackle bag for years.



Price: £11.99

The Techy Bits...

- Slider locator design
- Multiple-angle capability
- Brass thread
- Ideal for all types of tip work
- Compact, robust
- 12 settings
- 11 rod positions
- Over-moulded design



4 MUST-HAVE BAG-UP PRODUCTS

02 SHAKESPEARE SIGMA 10FT 5IN COMMERCIAL FLOAT ROD

What We Think...

You may think that the 10ft 5in length of the rod is strange, but the team at Shakespeare has carefully considered this to maximise your enjoyment when fishing commercial waters. This shorter than average rod makes for easy playing of fish and also improves casting accuracy over short distances, which you more often than not come across on commercial fisheries.

This attention to detail is something you normally see in higher-priced rods but at under £40 the Sigma Commercial Float certainly gives you value for money, and with more than enough quality to see you recording large bags of fish using it.



Price: £39.99

The Techy Bits...

- Fast/medium action
- Weighs 184g
- 3.18m long
- Designed for commercial use
- Two-piece construction



VAN DEN EYNDE RS ELITE EXPANDER PELLETS 03

What We Think...

When you buy any bait from Van Den Eynde you know you're buying quality, and this can be said of the company's RS Elite Expander Pellets. These pellets have a consistent size and contain just the right blend of fishmeal flavour to get those commercial carp interested.

They work well when pumped and can be used either on the hook or as feed pellets; unlike many other pellets VDE has worked hard to ensure the RS Elites don't break up easily, making them ideal for waggler fishing and hair rigging.



Price: £2.99

The Techy Bits...

- 4mm/6mm sizes
- Low oil content
- 500g
- Created by three-time world champion Marcel Van Den Eynde

04 MATRIX CARP MASTER SINKING MONOFILAMENT

What We Think...

Just the ticket for feeder work on commercials, it also suits waggler and bomb work down to the ground. It's fast-sinking so you can get your line under the water when waggler fishing to stop your float from moving around and away from your baited area.

This stuff is strong but also supple, making for a great all-round commercial mono.

Price: £5.99

The Techy Bits...

- 0.18mm, 0.20mm, 0.23mm, 0.25mm and 0.28mm sizes
- Low vis green
- High knot strength
- 150m



8 OF THE BEST...COMMERCIAL REELS

A techy look at eight high-flying reels well-suited to your commercial needs.

SHIMANO SEDONA C3000

- AR-C spool
- M-Compact XGT-7 body
- Varispeed II
- 3 shielded stainless steel + 1 roller bearing
- Front drag



245G

5.0:1

160M/
22LB

3+1

MAP P3000

- Balanced rotor
- Anti-twist line roller
- Sensitive front drag system
- Auto clip system
- Single and double handle



N/A

5.0:1

250M/
0.17MM

9

SHAKESPEARE SIGMA SUPRA

- Aluminium main spool
- Graphite spare deep spool
- Large-diameter bail wire
- Front drag
- Distinctive cosmetics with red trim



249G

5.0:1

214M/
0.18LB

4+1

BROWNING 930 XITAN MF

- Finely adjustable front drag
- Non-twist line roller supported by ball bearings
- Shallow aluminium spool
- Shallow aluminium spare spool
- Continuous anti-reverse



289G

6.0:1

190M/
0.20MM

9

DAIWA EXCELER 2500A

- Digigear II
- AirBail
- Air rotor
- UTD-Ultimate tournament drag
- Infinite anti-reverse
- Twistbuster



265G

4.8:1

190M/
6LB

4

DRENNAN SERIES 7 BR 9-30 CARP METHOD

- Reliable front-drag system
- Freespool lever at rear
- Single, reversible handle
- Ideal for feeder fishing
- Useful spool-filling advice on packaging
- Set of rubber line identification marker buttons
- Spare composite spool



N/A

N/A

100M/
8LB

9

MITCHELL MAG-PRO RZT

- 6.4kg of drag power
- Front drag
- Aluminium gear and main shaft
- Flat carbon handle
- Carbon fibre body and rotor
- Innovative bail halo



213G

5.8:1

120M/
0.25MM

4+1

PRESTON INNOVATIONS PC-R COMPETITION

- Parallel line lay oscillation system
- Over-sized metal line clip
- Lightweight aluminium body with sealed construction
- Quick-release push-button spool



361G

4.9:1

150M/
0.26MM

9

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MARGIN MUNTER MASH-UP!

Pole Fishing magazine's Matt Godfrey revisits the tactics he used to amass his biggest-ever bag of 316lb, in an arm-aching five hours at Leicestershire's Glebe Fishery...

BEST BAGGING DAYS

This particular match was quite a special one for everyone fishing, as it was the first memorial match for David Hall, the founder of David Hall Publishing and this very magazine. Taking place at the prolific Glebe Fishery, the conditions were far from ideal – there was a gale-force wind and rain forecast on and off throughout the day.

However, with the banter flowing and after a hearty breakfast, it wasn't going to stop us all having a good time!

PLAYING TO THE CONDITIONS

After dipping my hand into the draw bag, I pulled out Peg 20 on Lake One – I didn't have a clue what to expect of the swim as I'd only ever fished the venue a couple of times before.

On arriving at the peg, the wind was blowing strongly from left to right, which meant I was very limited as to the tactics I could use. I thought about fishing with the feeder to the far bank, but casting all that way over there would be tricky!

However, one thing that I have found over the years is that fish are much more confident to feed at close range in windy conditions. The waves stir up the water, and if you speak to any divers they will tell you that it's much noisier under the water when it's windy, and visibility is low. This means fish can't hear and see you as much, and drop their guard!

TACTICS

With all the above in mind, I settled on a minimal margin and short-pole attack. My theory was simple – if I didn't feed any bait for the fish out in the open water, they would have to come to me to eat! While assembling my gear I saw a couple of fish roll at close range, and even one in the margins – hopefully I was sat on a shedful!

On many commercial fisheries, a great tactic is to actually start by fishing in the margins. Fish are sometimes grubbing around from the night before, and you can often 'nick' a few quick fish.

I started by doing exactly that, fishing with just four metres of pole down the left-hand margin. My feed was a mixture of hemp and corn, but I didn't put in a lot of bait. I was aiming to get just one fish to come into the swim, suck up the small pile of bait and take my hook bait presented over the top too! First drop-in I managed to nail a common carp



Highly attractive, visible hook baits worked for Matt.

around 8lb, and in the opening 15 minutes of the session I netted four more carp too – some were only small, but I had a great start to the day by fishing here.

SHORT SUCCESS

Bites down the edge soon dried up – the fish obviously didn't like the disturbance and backed off a little further out. The next part of my plan was to fish the short pole, just five metres out.





Matt's best hook bait was eight dead maggots on a size 12 hook.



A huge weight of fish gave Matt the win!

move, and I managed to catch here for the following three hours!

Nearly all the fish were carp, the notorious hard-fighting Glebe bruisers, anywhere from 3lb to 8lb in weight. Again, hemp and corn was the winning bait combo, fishing with a single large grain of corn on the hook.

Because the fish were already present, there was no need to pile in loads of bait – I simply fed the same Cad Pot amount of corn and hemp, and placed my rig accurately over the top!

THE FINAL HOUR

I was still catching well at this point, but going into the final hour of the match I had a feeling I may be able to catch some even bigger fish by targeting the margins again. Often the big, wary critters move back into the edge to feed late in the day, so it's worthwhile targeting them.

In a bid to draw in large numbers of these fish, I fished down the opposite margin to where I'd started, to my right, where I found a depth of two and a half feet of water – perfect for catching carp. I decided on a groundbait attack, and using a large pole pot fed a full pot of wet groundbait after every fish.

The best hook bait was a big bunch of dead red maggots – I placed eight onto a size 12 hook to give me highly visible target bait for the fish to pick out. This switch to the edge was another great move – not only was I catching very quickly, but I also caught very big fish, to well over double figures!

ARM ACHE!

At the end of the five hours, I had several keepnets in the water, my arms were aching and I didn't have a clue what kind of weight I had. Des Shipp had already weighed in over 200lb of fish at the other end of the lake, while Andy Kinder had 230lb – surely I hadn't caught that much?

When the scales eventually arrived, it seemed to take forever to weigh in, and after checking the weights several times I was gobsmacked with my 316lb total, to win the match! What's more, however, I had caught every fish within just five metres of the bank, with incredibly simple tactics and baits. It just goes to show that you don't need complicated tricks to catch a lot of fish – often simplicity is the key!

COARSE FISHING

A lot of commercial fisheries have what is known as a near slope. This is basically where the depth gradually slopes away to the full depth of the lake. By plumbing up carefully you can find the bottom of this slope; the depth will get deeper and deeper before flattening out.

It is just at the bottom of this shelf that I like to fish. Often the bottom is much harder as there has been no silt build-up, which means the carp can cleanly suck up your bait, and you don't miss many bites or foul hook many fish.

Switching to this swim was a devastating



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